REGULATIONS AND CODE OF PRACTICE FOR RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMMES

2021/22

Summary of regulatory changes and/or additions for 2021/22

Section no		Page/s
2.1.2, 9.3.2 & 9.5.5	**_School PGR Director role in the examination process_** The formal School responsibilities in the examination process have been formally transferred from the Head of School to the School PGR Director.	3, 43, 54
4.3.1, 6.4.1, 6.4.2 & 9.2.2	**_Final submission date_** The term 'final submission date' has been adopted and its relationship to suspensions and extensions has been set out.	12, 31, 32, 39
4.3.2, 6.4.3 & 6.4.4	**_Suspensions, extensions, and the maximum completion period_** The requirement for Faculty PGR Directors to take the maximum completion period into account when approving requests for suspensions and extensions has been explicitly articulated.	13, 33
5.1.1	**_Main supervisors and supervisory teams_** Revised regulation clarifies that the main supervisor is responsible for regulatory and procedural elements of supervision but that the key intellectual input may be provided by another member of the supervisory team.	20
6.2	**_Annual progress reviews_** School PGR Directors will evaluate annual progress reviews, replacing the role previously undertaken by Faculty PGR Directors, but significant concerns can by escalated to Faculty PGR Directors. In addition, the requirement to submit to Turnitin as part of the annual progress review has been revised so at least one substantial piece of writing in years one to three must be submitted to Turnitin with the result discussed with the annual progress review panel.	28
9.2 & Annex 8	**_Academic integrity and plagiarism reviews_** The plagiarism procedure has been enhanced to provide more information and has been extended to include other transgressions in academic integrity.	37, 89
9.2.3 & Annex 4	**_Electronic submissions for examination_** Submission for examination has changed from physical to electronic form. Students must submit a pdf version of their dissertation.	39, 81
9.4.8 & Annex 6	**_Online oral examinations_** Revised regulation permits online oral examinations as a standard option rather than as an exception.	49, 85
9.5.3	**_Corrections, the internal examiner, and the Independent Chair_** Revised regulation clarifies that the internal examiner (or the Independent Chair if there is no internal examiner) is responsible for notifying the candidate and the Academic Quality and Policy Office when corrections have been satisfactorily completed.	52
Annex 17	**_Covid-19 statements in dissertations_** The policy on the inclusion of Covid-19 statements in dissertations has been extended to cover all research students who were registered during any period where Covid-19 restrictions were in place. Resubmissions have also been added explicitly to the policy.	126
Annex 19	**_Failure to complete assessment for research degrees_** _New annex on awards where a candidate is prevented by illness or other substantial cause from completing their dissertation and/or examination. This information was previously held as part of Ordinance 18._	134
Annex 20	**_Regulations for Higher Doctorates_** _New annex on applications and examinations for Higher Doctorates. This information was previously held alongside the Ordinances._	136

Dates approved	19 May 2021 and 15 June 2021
Approval Route	University Academic Quality and Standards Committee, Education Committee (with delegated authority from Senate)
Date of next review	Annual review – by June 2022
Responsibility for review	Codes Executive Group, Academic Quality and Policy Office

REGULATIONS AND CODE OF PRACTICE FOR RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMMES
2021-22

CONTENTS

These Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (hereafter "the Regulations and Code") apply to the degrees listed below.

Doctorates	**in the Faculty/Faculties of**
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	All faculties
Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS)	Health Sciences
Doctor of Education (EdD)	Social Sciences and Law
Doctor of Educational Psychology (DEdPsy)	Social Sciences and Law
Doctor of Medicine (MD)	Health Sciences Life Sciences
Doctor of Social Science (DSocSci)	Social Sciences and Law
Engineering Doctorate (EngD)	Engineering

Masters degrees by research	**in the Faculty/Faculties of**
Master of Music (MMus)	Arts
Master of Philosophy (MPhil)	Arts Social Sciences and Law
Master of Science by Research (MScR)	All faculties

There is a [combined list of academic awards](#) made by the University covering all levels of study. The information on [academic awards and honorary degrees](#) and on [convening of examination boards and assessment for academic awards](#), where relevant, is also applicable for research degrees. The [policy on supporting disabled students](#) applies to all students.

The Regulations and Code are for use by:
- supervisors of research students,
- research students,
- examiners of research degrees, and
- University staff responsible for postgraduate research programmes and students.

The Regulations and Code are updated annually so it is essential that research students and staff refer to the current edition. Only the current edition has regulatory status and supersedes all previous editions.

Higher Doctorates (DEng, DLitt, DMus, DSc, LLD) have separate regulations, which are presented in Annex 20.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Regulations and Code

The Regulations set out the University's requirements for:

- the management of research degree programmes;

- the mechanisms for assuring the academic standards of research degrees;

- the support (academic and pastoral) that should be provided for research students and the ways in which such support is offered.

The role of the regulations is to maintain the quality and academic standards of the University's research degree programmes and to provide clear guidance for research students and staff in schools.

As well as setting out the University's minimum requirements for postgraduate research degree programmes, the Regulations and Code aim to provide helpful background information for staff and research students, including details of internal policies and practice. The Regulations and Code are consistent with the University's policies and strategies and with Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) current requirements, including the Quality Code.

The sections of the Regulations and Code outlined in boxes throughout the text are University Regulations. They set out the University's minimum requirements/ responsibilities for postgraduate research programmes and must be followed.

The detailed regulations for the individual research degree programmes (listed on page 1) to which the Regulations and Code apply are in **Annex 1** (doctoral degrees) and **Annex 2** (Masters degrees by research) for ease of reference.

2   Institutional arrangements

2.1   Governance framework

2.1.1 The governance structure

Senate

Senate has responsibility for governance and for the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*.

University Education Committee

The University Education Committee is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) and has an overarching role for educational matters. It has delegated authority from Senate to approve revisions to the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*.

University Research Committee

The University Research Committee is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) and is the prime research planning committee for the University.

University PGR Committee

The University PGR Committee is chaired by the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR) and oversees postgraduate research and its provision.

University Academic Quality and Standards Committee

The University Academic Quality and Standards Committee is chaired by the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education Quality and Standards) and oversees the framework for the quality and standards of education, including postgraduate research. It oversees the review of the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*.

Research Degrees Examination Board

The University's Research Degrees Examination Board is chaired by the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR) and makes the decisions about the award of all research degrees at the University.

2.1.2 Governance roles

Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR)

The Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR) has academic leadership of the postgraduate research environment across the University and reports to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research).

Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education Quality and Standards)

The Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education Quality and Standards) has academic leadership of the quality and standards of education across the University and reports to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education).

Faculty PGR Director

Each faculty has a Faculty PGR Director who is directly responsible to the Dean of Faculty and accountable to the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR) for providing academic leadership in their faculty on postgraduate research matters.

School PGR Director

Each school has a School PGR Director who is directly responsible to the Head of School and accountable to the Faculty PGR Director for providing academic leadership in their school on postgraduate research matters. The functions of this role may be assigned to several individuals within the school, but a formal School PGR Director will be appointed to provide direction on school-level postgraduate research activities. The Head of School retains responsibility for workload considerations, such as the appointment of supervisors.

2.1.3 Other University-level groups

Bristol Doctoral College

The [Bristol Doctoral College](#) (BDC) facilitates cross-University learning and training activities for all research students. It delivers the University-wide Personal and Professional Development programme. The BDC serves as a hub for information, guidance and communications for research students, including in relation to external collaborators, potential sponsors, funders and future employers. It also works on marketing and recruitment, promoting and showcasing success stories and opportunities for research students in Bristol.

2.2 Academic standards

The Regulations and Code align with the current QAA [Quality Code for Higher Education](#) for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education. The University's research degrees accord with the current QAA Qualification Characteristics for Doctoral and Masters Degrees and are mapped against national benchmarking standards.

UK research degrees are in alignment with the European-wide guidance, as shown in the *[Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area](#)*. University of Bristol research degrees are therefore recognised as having Europe-wide equivalence.

The University has several mechanisms for assuring itself that the academic standards of the research degrees it awards are at an appropriate level. The following paragraphs describe the measures that contribute to setting and maintaining these standards.

Quality of students and academic staff

The University takes care to recruit students who meet the entrance criteria for its research programmes (see Section 4).

The University recruits academic staff who can fulfil its requirements for conducting research and contributing to education. Specifications for appointments and promotion/progression can be found on the [University website](#).

Criteria against which candidates for staff appointments and promotion are measured include research success or potential and the ability to teach and inspire students at all levels.

Quality of supervision

The University provides guidance on supervision of research students as part of its *CREATE CPD scheme* for new academic staff, and mentoring arranged at school level. Development sessions will also be offered for experienced staff wanting to refresh their practice as part of the broader Academic Staff Development programme.

Annual progress review

All research students and supervisors are required to engage in the annual progress review process (see Section 6). One of the main purposes of the annual progress review is to assure the student, the supervisors and the relevant school and faculty that academic progress is satisfactory.

External examining

When approving the appointment of examiners for research degrees, School PGR Directors and Faculty PGR Directors are required to confirm that the potential examiners have the appropriate knowledge and experience to carry out the assessment effectively. The criteria for selection of research degree examiners are described in Section 9.3.

External benchmarks of research quality

These are covered in Section 3: the research environment.

2.3 Academic integrity

Students and staff are expected to commit to the values of academic integrity and to uphold high standards. The core values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage form the foundations of the University's approach. Academic integrity is integral to university study and academic life.

Students are responsible, with appropriate guidance, for adopting academic integrity in all areas of their studies, including in relation to assessment. The academic integrity approach contributes to students' personal and intellectual development within a community and culture of learning.

The University combines developing and nurturing academic integrity with a recognition that transgressions undermine its core values. Academic misconduct is taken seriously, and suspected transgressions are investigated, with a set of penalties available when academic misconduct has been proven.

The academic integrity policy, which applies to all levels of study, sets out the University's approach and defines a common understanding of academic integrity, including on its values and on responsibilities.

2.4 Maintaining and improving the quality of research degree programmes

The University ensures that it continues to meet UK quality standards for research degrees and accords with national guidelines.

The Research Degrees Examination Board fulfils the role of assuring consistency of academic standards across all faculties, scrutinising all research degree examiners' reports

and taking account of their comments concerning the process and operation of research degree assessment.

Research students' views

The University regularly gathers feedback from research students about their experience at Bristol and uses the results to inform the development of its provision.

Liaison with the University of Bristol Students' Union

The postgraduate education officer provides a student voice as a member of the University PGR Committee and other relevant committees and groups. Other officers, student representatives and staff employed by the University of Bristol Students' Union are also engaged in dialogue on postgraduate matters as appropriate.

2.5   Regulations for research degrees

The University's regulations for research degrees (**Annexes 1** and **2**) cover:
- the duration of the period of study (full time and part-time equivalent);
- the modes of study permitted;
- how a candidate can achieve the award;
- what the nature and size of the dissertation or equivalent should be; and
- the nature of the assessment and any generic assessment criteria that are applicable.

> All research students and their supervisors must be aware of the requirements of these Regulations and Code and of the regulations that govern the award for which the student is registered.

2.6   Monitoring of research degree programmes against indicators and targets

The University uses the following indicators for monitoring research degree programmes:

Submission and qualification[1] rates for postgraduate research degrees

Submission and qualification rate data are considered by the University at various levels. Faculty PGR Directors work with individual schools if a need for improvement is identified.

Annual monitoring statistics

Annual monitoring statistics are scrutinised by schools as part of the Education Action Plan (EAP) process.

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[1] The term 'qualification rate' (also known as 'completion rate') refers to the length of time it takes from the date of registration on a research degree programme for a student to be awarded the qualification by the University Research Degrees Examination Board.

3   The research environment

The University provides a high-quality research environment, as shown by its consistent excellent performance in successive external research audits. The University's Strategy aims to maintain and improve on this long-standing success through a variety of actions.

The research environments in the faculties are designed to support the needs of the cognate disciplines within each faculty. The way in which research in different subjects in a faculty is conducted therefore influences the organisation of research activities, the support for research students and the management of research degree programmes.
The University is part of many cross-institutional research collaborations and research students are encouraged, where appropriate, to contribute to collaborative research in order to develop the skills required for involvement in research of international excellence.

There is a range of externally funded initiatives that provide doctoral training in the postgraduate research environment. These initiatives are often cross-institutional in nature and may contain research degree programmes that combine a structured taught component with the research project. There are a number of different models, which are grouped under the general term 'doctoral training entities', including:

- A Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) provides training for cohorts of research students within focused research areas, often defined strategically by the UK Research Council funder(s) and concentrated on academic and/or industrially relevant research topics.

- A Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) provides training for cohorts of research students across a broad range of subjects as determined by the research institution(s).

- A Doctoral Training Centre (DTC) provides training for cohorts of research students.

- An Industrial Doctoral Centre (IDC) provides training for cohorts of research students and incorporates a strong industrial focus.

In addition, Innovative Training Network (ITN) is an umbrella term for a group of European Council funded collaborative programmes, based on a multi-organisational and international model of training that facilitates mobility of PhD researchers who are classified as Early Stage Researchers (ESRs). ESRs are registered as both PhD students and employees of their home university. These programmes often offer dual/joint awards.

The University's expectations of the ways in which schools provide an appropriate research environment for research students to learn about and carry out research are:

3.1   Schools and faculties must ensure that the student can interact with sufficient research-active staff in the student's area of research within the school, the faculty, the University, or elsewhere.

3.2   Students working remotely from their school, including those writing up, must have access to appropriate facilities to support their work, including those available electronically.

3.3   All students are entitled to opportunities to experience and contribute to research activities, at school and faculty level, as appropriate. Schools and faculties must have strategies in place to enable students to make the most of these opportunities, for example, by presenting their research at school seminars.

3.4   Where the student's project requires research facilities or expertise beyond those that are available within the school, faculty or University, the school must ensure that the student has adequate access elsewhere.

4 Admission and induction of students

4.1 Admissions

The University has a set of admissions principles and procedures that should be considered and followed by those involved with research degree programme admissions.

4.1.1 Admission requirements

General admission requirements for entry to research degree programmes are contained in the [Postgraduate Prospectus](). Each programme or group of programmes will provide a detailed admissions statement that details entry requirements and any local admissions procedures. Admissions statements are accessible via the online prospectus pages. Doctoral training entities may have specific entry criteria and these should be outlined within the online information available.

There are specific admission requirements for distance learning research students as set out in the *Policy for Research Degrees by Distance Learning* in Annex 11.

Some programmes or specific doctoral projects with external sponsorship may need to include clarification on intellectual property rights, in line with the University's *[Intellectual Property Policy for Students]()*.

The following are the University's minimum requirements for entry to research degree programmes:

- a first degree, normally at a level equivalent to at least UK Honours 2.1 level; *or*

- a relevant postgraduate Masters qualification; *or*

- evidence of prior learning or achievement that enables the University to assess the candidate's potential to succeed in the programme applied for.

Applicants whose first language is not English are required to satisfy the University's [Language Entry Requirements]().

Faculties and schools should facilitate and encourage students to attend language courses, as appropriate, either before their programme begins or during the programme if required by the school/faculty.

4.1.2 Admission procedures

The University Student Recruitment Committee has overall responsibility for postgraduate admissions. It is chaired by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Global Engagement) and is responsible for:

- the annual review of the admissions principles and procedures that apply to research degree programmes, and

- assuring itself that faculty/school admissions practices are aligned with University policy.

Faculty PGR Directors oversee postgraduate admissions within their faculties, approving any offers made outside normal entry requirements.

Heads of School are normally responsible for the integrity of the admissions processes in their school. It is therefore the Head of School's responsibility to appoint school admissions

selectors, and to ensure that these selectors are given time to undergo training in admissions and have sufficient resources for them to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

Interviews: If interviews take place, the training in recruitment and selection detailed in the University's resourcing guidance may be beneficial.

The University's core requirements in respect of decisions made about formal applications for admission to research degree programmes are:

> Decisions on admissions to research programmes must be taken by two or more members of academic staff. Selectors must ensure that all admissions decisions take account of the University's statutory responsibilities in respect of equal opportunities and any related University policies and must be based on fair and justifiable criteria. Selectors should encourage applicants to disclose disabilities in order that appropriate support may be put in place.
>
> In the case of entrants seeking to use accreditation of prior learning or achievement to meet the entry requirement for admission to a research degree programme, criteria must be in place to enable a prospective research student's preparedness and potential to complete the programme to be evaluated. Those involved in decision-making will provide evidence that the criteria have been applied to the relevant faculty office.
>
> The reasons for the decision made must be recorded in a brief file note.
>
> Interview panels should normally include the applicant's expected supervisors although for some doctoral training entities this may not be possible if supervisors are not known at this point.
>
> For some doctoral training entities, the admissions process may need to accommodate multiple institutions. In such cases, it is important that the core principles of the University's admissions policy are incorporated.

4.1.3 Pre-entry advice for disabled students

All applicants are considered using equitable academic criteria. Prospective students who have a disability are encouraged to make early contact with Disability Services to discuss what support may be offered by the University, and how it may be funded, so that they can make an informed choice about any offer of a place.

4.1.4 Pre-entry advice for faculties/schools where an applicant has a disability

Advice is available from Disability Services to staff on how the faculty/school can support disabled students. Applicants should be encouraged to declare any disability at the earliest opportunity and staff should support this and signpost such students to Disability Services. To promote early contact, offer letters to successful applicants also provide appropriate signposting to Disability Services. In addition, there are School Disability Coordinators who have oversight of the support for disabled students within each school.

4.2   Registration

The required period of study is laid down in the regulations for each degree. Students must register with the University when they begin their studies and at the start of each academic year. Continued registration is subject to satisfactory progress.

No student registered for a programme of full-time study leading to a qualification of the University of Bristol may concurrently be registered on a programme of full-time or part-time study leading to an award of a qualification at this or another institution unless this is a requirement of their programme of study (normally only applies to students on professional programmes and to joint or dual awards) or is covered by the following clause.

It is permissible for a student registered for a Masters degree by research to be registered for a doctorate at the University at the same time provided that the student has already submitted the dissertation for their Masters degree by research and that the offer of the doctoral place is not conditional on the result. If the outcome of the examination of the Masters degree by research is errors of substance or more severe, the student should either suspend from their doctorate while completing the Masters or withdraw from the Masters.

Unless otherwise specified as part of a partnership agreement, the provisions of these Regulations and Code apply to all University of Bristol-registered research students during periods of study at another organisation.

For collaborative PhD programmes, students registered at the University of Bristol may be subject to the regulations of a partner organisation for some or all of any taught component. This will be specified in the partnership agreement.

For joint or dual awards, there may be a combination of examination procedures that cover the University of Bristol regulations and those of another institution so that both Section 9 of the Regulations and Code and the requirements of the other institution (such as, for example, to cover a public defence) are met. This will be specified in the partnership agreement.

Doctoral students transferring to the University must complete a minimum of one year study full-time (or part-time equivalent) in order to be eligible for a doctoral award. This does not include the writing-up period.

Schools wishing to accept a doctoral student from elsewhere who is part way through their studies must be satisfied that the student has worked at an equivalent level to a Bristol doctoral student at a comparable stage.

In some faculties, students aiming for a doctoral degree are in the first instance registered for a Masters degree by research and are eligible for transfer to registration for the PhD degree, subject to satisfying the requirements set by the faculty and/or school. The transfer process normally occurs after one year and is subject to satisfactory progress.

In some cases, students on specific doctoral training programmes (usually of a 1+3 design) may be required initially to satisfy the requirements of a specific taught Masters award and

will then be eligible to progress on to a doctorate. Such students are covered by the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes* for their taught Masters and may also be governed by specific programme rules.

4.3 Period of study

4.3.1 The minimum and maximum periods of study

The minimum and maximum periods of study permitted for the University's research degree programmes are summarised in table 4.3.1.

The period of study begins when the student first registers for the degree programme. Where a student initially registers for a Masters degree by research and later transfers to a doctoral degree, the period of study begins on the date of registration for the Masters degree. Where a student transfers from a doctoral degree to a Masters degree by research, the Faculty PGR Director will, based on the circumstances, approve an appropriate remaining period of study to allow the student time to submit a dissertation for a Masters degree by research.

Table 4.3.1   *Normal minimum and maximum periods of study*

Doctorates	F/T Minimum	F/T Maximum	P/T Maximum
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	3 yrs	4 yrs	7 yrs
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Musical Composition	3 yrs	4 yrs	7 yrs
Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS)	3 yrs	3 yrs	6 yrs
Doctor of Education (EdD)	3 yrs	4 yrs	7 yrs
Doctor of Educational Psychology (DEdPsy)	3 yrs	4 yrs	7 yrs
Doctor of Medicine (MD)	2 yrs	5 yrs	7 yrs
Doctor of Social Science (DSocSci)	3 yrs	4 yrs	7 yrs
Engineering Doctorate (EngD)	3 yrs	4 yrs	7 yrs
Masters degrees by research	**F/T Minimum**	**F/T Maximum**	**P/T Maximum**
Master of Music (MMus)	2 yrs	3 yrs	5 yrs
Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Arts	1 yr	1 yr	2 yrs
Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Social Sciences and Law	1 yr	2 yrs	3 yrs
Master of Science by Research (MScR)	1 yr	2 yrs	3 yrs

The normal minimum and maximum periods of study for research students registered part time **assume students are studying on a half time basis**. If this is not the case, then the period of study should be adjusted accordingly on a pro-rata basis.

Periods of study may be varied for named programmes as specified in the individual programme regulations in **Annex 1** and **Annex 2**. Information on changes to the period of study relevant to full-time EngD students and to some full-time PhD students who are funded by an official sponsor is included in Annex 1.

> All research students must submit their dissertation on or before their final submission date.

Where a research student does not submit on or before their final submission date the student will be deemed to have withdrawn due to lapse of time.

The final submission date is the end of the maximum period of study plus any modifications from approved extensions and/or suspensions (see Section 6.4 for more information on extensions and suspensions).

Sponsored research students may also be subject to their sponsors' requirements in respect of submission.

The period allowed for writing up for a research degree is one year for both full-time and part-time students.

After submission, research students must complete all subsequent requirements and be awarded their degree by the end of their overall maximum completion period (see Section 4.3.2).

Research students should consider how they will complete all aspects of their research degree, including writing up, before their final submission date and ideally within any funded period that supports them. The way in which writing up is incorporated into the programme of work that makes up a research degree will vary with discipline. In some disciplines, where the research involves the use of specialised resources or facilities, there may be restrictions on access to these in the final year of the research degree (i.e. year 4 of a full-time PhD and year 2 of a full-time MScR) due to an expectation that data collection is completed and the research student is focusing on data analysis and writing up. All research students are advised to discuss the writing up aspect of their project with their supervisory team at the start of their study and to review on an ongoing basis. This will enable a plan of work with clear expectations to be agreed and modified as necessary.

4.3.2 The overall maximum completion period

The University imposes an **overall maximum completion period** to ensure that research students do not take an excessive amount of time to complete their degrees. The maximum completion period, set out below, refers to the total time limits for doctoral awards and masters by research awards and is not altered by any suspensions or extensions that might have been granted (see Section 6.4). The submission of the dissertation must be on or before the final submission date as set out in Section 4.3.1.

The maximum completion period runs from initial registration to final approval of the award by the Research Degrees Examination Board.

The maximum completion period for any research degree programme is the maximum period of study plus five years.

The maximum completion period is fixed from the point of initial registration and is not altered by any approved extensions and/or suspensions.

4.4   Attendance requirement

Research students must normally ensure that they are able to attend the University in person as reasonably required by their supervisors, as well as to participate in any relevant training or developmental opportunities and to contribute to wider research activities within their discipline. The attendance requirement for part-time students should take their circumstances into account and should be on a pro-rata basis. Students undertaking fieldwork, placements or research at an external facility, which has been agreed with their supervisors, may be away from the University for the duration of the activity.

The only exceptions to the attendance requirement are:

- Distance learning students have separate attendance requirements in the *Policy for Research Degrees by Distance Learning* in Annex 11;

- Students studying for joint and dual PhDs[2] are normally required to be in attendance at the University for at least 30% of their programme. Students who are studying as part of a collaborative partnership or doctoral training entity may spend more time away from the University if this is specified in the partnership agreement;

- Students who are writing up following the completion of their research phase; or

- Students with individual exceptional circumstances, where this has been supported by the supervisors and approved by the Faculty PGR Director. A transfer to distance learning may however be the most appropriate course of action if a student is unable to meet the standard attendance requirement.

The *Policy on Placements for Research Students* (Annex 13) should be followed when placements are being developed.

4.5   Induction

Prospective research students will receive information about the induction procedures for their research degree programme when they are notified that their application has been successful, prior to their expected start date, so that they are aware of what to expect when they start their degree programme. Information for new students is also available on the University's website.

The induction programme for new research students at the beginning of the academic year may be comprised of University-wide and/or faculty events, both of which are complemented by induction at school or programme level. The timing and content of induction activities should take account of the needs of different groups of research students, including those studying part-time or by distance learning, and international students arriving in the UK for the first time.

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[2] A **joint doctoral award** is one which leads to a single award for a research degree programme which is jointly offered by the partner institutions. The single award certificate will be endorsed by all partners. A **dual doctoral award** is one which leads to separate awards from two partner institutions involved in a joint research degree programme. Each award certificate will refer to the joint programme.

Faculties and schools normally ensure induction for those students who begin their research programme part way through the year is tailored to enable them to understand their faculty, school and programme of study.

4.5.1. The University's minimum requirements for induction of new research students are:

All research students, including part-time students and those working remotely, must receive appropriate information about the environment in which they will be studying and pursuing research, including the names and contact details of all those involved in guiding and supporting them within their school or faculty and in the wider University.

All research students must receive appropriate induction that provides them with the information they will need to begin their programmes. Faculties and schools should determine what is covered at their respective levels.

Research students must receive detailed information about University regulations and policies that apply to their programme, including:
- supervision;
- progress monitoring and review;
- regulations that apply to the degree for which the student is registered;
- assessment criteria and regulations that apply to the degree for which the student is registered; and
- any institutional or faculty codes of practice that apply to the research degree programme.

Full information about supervisory arrangements is critical as these affect many aspects of the research degree programme. Research students should be made aware of the importance of their relationship with their supervisors and should understand their own role and that of their supervisors.

Induction programmes should also provide information for research students on:

- the learning infrastructure and how to access it, including arrangements for remote access, available equipment, library and computing facilities and any social space specially designated for research students;

- the University's expectations of the student's responsibilities;

- the day-to-day support and communication that students can access, including the school's arrangements for pastoral care,

- the opportunities available for the student to develop subject-specific and transferable skills;

- school and faculty arrangements for evaluating student satisfaction and dealing with problems encountered by students; and

- arrangements for meeting students' personal, social, welfare and recreational needs, including information about facilities, opportunities and support available within the University.

4.6   Student entitlements and responsibilities

Research students must be made aware of their entitlements and responsibilities, initially by the offer letter they receive from the University and subsequently at their initial meeting with their supervisors and/or at meetings with the school postgraduate support team (for example the School PGR Director/Tutor, or equivalent, and relevant professional service staff).

4.6.1 Research students studying at Bristol can expect the following entitlements and will be asked to accept the following responsibilities:

A student's entitlements

- Adequate opportunities to meet their supervisors. As a guideline, it is normal for research students and their supervisors to review progress at least once a month (see Section 5.1.2).

- Before they start, details of the fees the University will charge for the programme and of any other expenditure necessitated by conducting research, e.g. bench fees.

- Information about special requirements in connection with their research project, e.g. the need to travel elsewhere to perform experimental work or use specialist libraries.

- Details of the length of time within which they must complete their programme of study/research.

- Information about arrangements for monitoring academic progress.

- Responses to queries they raise with their supervisor within a timescale agreed in advance.

- The return of written work, with appropriate and detailed feedback, within an agreed time scale.

- Access to a learning infrastructure that supports the progress of their studies and their ability to complete the degree successfully within the required time period.

- Access to an appropriate research environment, within the University or collaborating institutions, where relevant and sufficient expertise and appropriate facilities exist to support the student's research programme.

- Access to appropriate opportunities for developing research and transferable skills, including opportunities to practise for the oral examination.

- Where feasible, opportunities to participate in teaching, provided that it is not to the detriment of their research work, plus access to appropriate training and mentoring arrangements. See the University's *Policy for Postgraduate Research Students who Teach* in Annex 18.

- Information about support available at school, faculty and University level.

- Details of any relevant practical information, for example, accommodation and financial or travel information.

- Twenty-five days holiday a year, in addition to days when the University is closed.

- Where relevant, details of appropriate language courses.

A student's responsibilities

- To register with the University before beginning their studies and at the start of each academic session and pay any relevant fees.

- To meet the attendance requirement set out in Section 4.4.

- To inform supervisors if away due to illness or other personal events.

- To take prime responsibility for the progress of their research and for the preparation and submission of their dissertation, including reaching agreement on the intended submission date with supervisors (see Section 9.2.2 on the timing of submissions), and for the completion of any corrections or a resubmission required by the examiners.

- To take prime responsibility for their personal and professional development. It is acknowledged that research students may require more guidance and support at the start of their studies, but there is an expectation that the student will progressively take ownership of their own personal and professional development. See also the *Personal and Professional Development Policy for Research Students* in Annex 12.

- To complete their research within the standard period of study. There is an expectation that full-time research students will work on their research project, including any work related to their studentship, for an average of at least 35 hours per week. Part-time students are expected to work on their projects for a length of time that is pro rata with the full-time expectation. Students' workloads will vary throughout the year as well as at different stages of their projects and this should be discussed with their supervisors. Students who for specific reasons, such as caring responsibilities, wish to work flexibly should discuss this with their supervisors in the first instance.

  The University recognises that many research students may rely on paid employment to help fund their studies and/or gain valuable work experience. Achieving a sensible balance between work and study is essential. It is critical that research students take responsibility for ensuring that other activities do not adversely affect the progress of their studies.

  All research students must ensure that they are aware of, and comply with, any restrictions on paid work that may be imposed by external sources, such as visa requirements or the funding source for their studies. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of these limitations and ensure they comply.

- To be aware that unsatisfactory progress due to external working may result in the initiation of the enhanced academic support process (Section 6.3), which may lead on to the procedure for unsatisfactory academic progress (Annex 3).

- To ensure that they understand the roles and responsibilities of their supervisory team and the support structures operating in their school and faculty.

- To treat all members of University staff and students with due respect and consideration.

- To develop and maintain effective working relationships with their supervisors and other University staff and students. Any concerns over this should be raised with the school's postgraduate team as soon as they occur.

- To keep in regular contact with their supervisors, particularly when away from the University. Regular contact with supervisors must be maintained during the period allowed to complete any corrections or a resubmission required by the examiners.

- To comply with:

    o the University regulations governing their degree programme;

    o the University *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*;

    o the University's *Rules and Regulations for Students*;

    o the University's approach to academic integrity (see Section 2.3);

    o the University's regulations and guidelines on research misconduct and plagiarism;

    o relevant legal and ethical requirements, and University rules, including those covering health and safety, data protection, and confidentiality;

    o the University's *Intellectual Property Policy for Students*; and

    o the norms of good research practice applicable to their area of research and of the University's *Research Governance and Integrity Policy*.

- To meet the University's requirements for good academic conduct, including:

    o Making timely submissions of written work.

    o Ensuring that meeting with supervisors occur at regular intervals, as agreed between the student and supervisors, and that the student's contribution to these meetings is appropriate. The frequency of contact will vary between disciplines and research progress. Any concern about the frequency of meetings should normally be raised with the supervisory team in the first instance and then the school postgraduate team if the concern is not resolved.

    o Complying with the University's rules and with the requirements of any sponsoring or funding bodies concerning intellectual property.

    o Keeping appropriate records of their research, of their personal development and of formal meetings with supervisors, for example through the use of available online facilities.

    o Making appropriate acknowledgement of the contribution made by the supervisor and any other person in any publication arising from the research work.

- To ensure that they have the necessary financial support to enable completion of the programme.

- To keep their personal information up to date via the Studentinfo online link.

> **International students** with student visa or immigration questions must only discuss these with staff in **Student Visa Services**. These staff are specially trained to advise international students with any queries and are also responsible for providing general support and guidance to international students.

4.6.2 Support available for students

Information for students on the range of support at the University is available via the [Current Students webpage](#). This acts as a first point of reference and provides a signpost to relevant services and resources. Faculties and schools may provide additional support and this should be clearly signposted to students. [Just Ask](#), a confidential advice service provided by Bristol Students' Union, is also available to students.

5   Supervision

5.1   The supervisory process

Supervisors have a fundamental role in supporting their research students throughout the period of the students' studies. The supervisory process will operate with some variance because of the nature of particular disciplines and related research environments. There are however a set of minimum requirements for supervisors that must be met across the University.

5.1.1   *The minimum requirements for the supervision of all research students are:*

Each research student must have a supervisory team comprising at least two supervisors, including a main supervisor who has primary responsibility for supervisory support and in whose school the student should normally be registered. The main supervisor is always responsible for the regulatory and procedural elements of supervision (as defined in the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*) but another member of the supervisory team may take the lead for the key intellectual input. All members of the supervisory team must have defined roles and responsibilities, which must be communicated to the student.

If a student's research requires working elsewhere (e.g. as part of a collaborative project), the School should ensure that appropriate supervisory arrangements, understood by the student, are in place to cover periods spent away from the University.

Information provided to research students that is of relevance to their supervisors' academic and pastoral responsibilities must be copied to the main supervisor.

5.1.2. The minimum requirements for input from, and interactions with, supervisors for all research students:

Identification of the main supervisor

The normal expectation is that research students will be given the name and contact details of their main supervisor before arriving at the University. For doctoral training entities with an integrated taught component, a named academic will be appointed to provide appropriate support if a supervisor is not in place for the first year of study.

Formal supervisory meetings

Supervisors must take the initiative in making the first contact with their research students. The first meeting should normally take place within a week of a student's registration.

At the first meeting, it is usual to discuss the student's outline research plan, and any sponsorship or other financial arrangements, if these have not been agreed beforehand. It is also an opportunity to discuss any specific support or training needs the student may have and to direct them to appropriate sources of support.

After the first meeting, it becomes a shared responsibility between student and supervisors to maintain regular and adequate contact, irrespective of the student's location. Where a student has more than one supervisor, the supervisors should meet the student together to

decide how they will divide responsibility for advice and to agree arrangements for future meetings.

The student and supervisors must agree the frequency, duration and format of their formal meetings, as well as the topics to be covered, and keep them under review thereafter.

The frequency of formal meetings will be determined by the nature and stage of the student's research. As a guideline, formal meetings to review progress should normally be scheduled for at least once a month. These meetings should take place either in person or through video or audio link. It may be necessary or appropriate to change the frequency of meetings depending on progress and performance.

The student and supervisors must develop a shared understanding of the purpose of meetings, especially those that are about formal review of the student's progress. A record of formal meetings must be kept, normally by the student.

Supervisors must also be reasonably accessible to their students outside of the formal meeting schedule to provide advice.

Supervisors share responsibility with the student to develop and maintain an effective working relationship.

The supervisory process

Supervisors must comment on their research student's written work, with feedback being given promptly so as not to impede the student's progress.

If a student is experiencing serious difficulty with the use of English, supervisors must discuss this with the student as early as possible, and it is recommended that the student should consult staff in the Centre for English Language and Foundation Studies for advice, if this is necessary.

Supervisors must ensure that students are aware of the need to maintain academic integrity (see Section 2.3), of the academic standards expected for the degree for which they are studying and of their responsibilities as set out in Section 4.6. This includes the submission of the student's dissertation on or before the final submission date (see Section 4.3).

As set out in Section 7, supervisors must regularly review training needs with the student, including in relation to personal and professional development.

Early in the programme, at their first meeting, if possible, the student and supervisors must agree the nature and timing of any taught components of the student's programme and discuss the implications of failure to complete them.

Supervisors must provide guidance to their students on how to access pastoral advice and other forms of support from within the school, faculty and University. Students must be informed in detail of the full support structure available to them. Information for students is also available on the Current Students webpage.

Supervisors and the dissertation

Supervisors must discuss preparations for the submission of the dissertation with the student and agree on the intended submission date (see Section 9.2.2 on the timing of submissions).

Supervisors must review a student's progress no later than four months before the student's agreed intended submission date. The supervisors and student must also discuss potential examiners at the review point if this discussion has not already started. The main supervisor must propose suitable examiners on the relevant appointment form no later than three months before the intended submission date (see Section 9.3 on the selection and appointment of examiners).

Supervisors and the student must agree a timetable for discussing the draft submission. The student is responsible for sharing drafts with supervisors so that there is sufficient time for the supervisors to comment. Supervisors in turn must provide written comments in good time so as not to jeopardise the timing of the formal submission of the dissertation.

Supervisors are responsible for offering guidance to their research students on the preparation of their dissertations, up to and including the final stages of drafting, and on corrections or a resubmission required by the examiners (see below for the expectations of support for corrections or a resubmission). However, the ultimate responsibility for the content of the dissertation and the decision to submit the work rests with the student. Supervisors should make it clear that their comments are advisory.

Supervisors must provide guidance to their students to assist them in understanding the nature and substance of supervisor comments so that, if appropriate, the comments may be incorporated into the final version of the dissertation.

Supervisors must ensure that the student is aware of the University's Open Access policies and the copyright implications of publishing their dissertation in the institutional repository, providing advice and guidance on deferral procedures where needed (see Section 9.2.5 on deferrals).

Supervisors, if they consider the approach appropriate, should provide guidance to the student on the integration of publications as chapters within the dissertation (see Annex 5).

Responsibility for ensuring that proofreading is done to the required standard lies with the student (see Section 9.2.1 on proofreading and the dissertation for further information).

Supervisors must not contact examiners about the examination process beyond discussing the practical arrangements for the oral examination, which may cover any extenuating circumstances (see Section 9.4.6), with the internal examiner or the Independent Chair (if appointed). Supervisors must not discuss the examiners' recommendation with examiners during any part of the examination process.

Supervisory support for corrections or a resubmission

Supervisors are responsible for supporting their research students through any corrections or a resubmission required by the examiners. Supervisors must agree a clear schedule with the student and must maintain contact at least on a monthly basis during the period allowed for corrections or for a resubmission. The research student may be remote from the University during this period, and the onus is on the supervisors to ensure that appropriate contact and

> support is provided. The research student also has a role in maintaining regular contact with their supervisors.

5.1.3 Guidance for supervisors on wider support and networking opportunities for their research students

Supervisors are part of a wider support network for their research students, and supervisors should be aware of the other available sources of support. Supervisors play an important part in helping a student to make contact with alternative sources of support within the school and in the wider University; for example: student advisers, school staff with designated responsibilities for pastoral care of research students, career advisers and other sources of pastoral advice and support for current students. Just Ask, a confidential advice service provided by Bristol Students' Union, is also available to students). See also the practical guide for supervisors in supporting their research students in Annex 16.

Supervisors should also help students to network with others working in their field of research, for example by attending relevant conferences and seeking sources of funding for such events and submitting papers to conferences and journals. Supervisors should also help the student engage with other researchers by providing information of any relevant research being undertaken within the school or University more broadly.

5.2   Supervisors' knowledge, skills and responsibilities

Given their wide-ranging and important responsibilities, supervisors must have the appropriate knowledge and skills to provide effective support for their research students. This includes an awareness of the needs of different types of students and the academic standards and requirements of different research programmes. Annex 16 provides a practical guide for supervisors in supporting their research students mainly in relation to non-academic matters, but it also touches on some academic matters of a general nature.

Heads of School must ensure that the supervisors of research students have sufficient time to provide adequate support for each student. In determining overall workloads, Heads of School must take account of the range of responsibilities assigned to individual members of staff.

Experience of supervising taught Masters students during the dissertation stage of their degree can be a helpful background for a new supervisor of research students. Team supervision can also help new supervisors to acquire the necessary skills and expertise for their role.

There are specific considerations in relation to the supervision of distance learning research students as set out in the *Policy for Research Degrees by Distance Learning* in Annex 11.

5.2.1 Responsibilities of Heads of School

> It is the responsibility of the Head of School (or nominee) to ensure that suitable supervisors are appointed, that they have the appropriate knowledge and skills, and that they have time to carry out their supervisory duties. Each supervisory team must satisfy the relevant Quality Assurance Agency requirements.

With regards to the suitability of supervisors, the Head of School (or nominee) shall consider whether there is an actual or potential conflict of interest before appointing main or co-supervisors. A 'conflict of interest' comprises a relationship between a supervisor and a student that would prevent or adversely affect the impartiality of the supervision, such as through personal, family or financial connections. Industrial or other professional supervisors (if involved) are included in these considerations.

The Head of School (or nominee) may request advice from the Faculty PGR Director on the appointment of supervisory teams.

5.2.2 Appointment criteria for main supervisors

Individuals being nominated for appointment as the research student's main supervisor should:
1. Be a member of academic staff holding an open contract of employment at the University of at least 0.5 FTE[3];
2. Expect to remain in a research-active position within the University for the expected duration of the student's studies and be able to provide the necessary guidance and support to their research students;
3. Be reasonably accessible;
4. Have an understanding of University, faculty and school policies and procedures concerning research students and supervisory responsibilities;
5. Have a minimum of three years' experience of research degree supervision and have experience of supervising at least one doctoral student through to successful completion.

Exceptionally, a school may appoint an individual who does not satisfy 4 and 5, provided an experienced co-supervisor is also appointed. The Faculty PGR Director must approve the arrangement and the main supervisor must comply with any faculty-specific training requirements. In such cases, the experienced co-supervisor will act as mentor to the main supervisor and will also act as the first point of contact for the student for non-academic matters. The Faculty PGR Director must be satisfied that the supervisory team can provide an appropriate level of support and guidance to a candidate before confirming the appointment of the supervisor under these conditions.

5.2.3 Appointment of co-supervisors

As well as the main supervisor, there must be at least one co-supervisor for each research student.

The following categories of staff may not be the main supervisor but may act as a co-supervisor with the permission of the Faculty PGR Director.

▪ Visiting Professors and Visiting Research Fellows, provided that they will be in post for the duration of the student's degree and are able to maintain regular contact with the student.
▪ Emeritus and retired members of staff, provided that they continue to be research-active and are able to maintain regular contact with the student. Such staff are

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[3] An open contract of employment carries full employment rights and has no fixed end date. Some staff with proleptic appointments will have open contracts depending on the nature of their individual contracts of employment.

permitted to act as co-supervisor for continuing students but should not be appointed to supervise new students.

- Members of staff who are themselves currently registered as candidates for research degrees.
- Members of academic staff who have yet to complete their initial service review.
- Members of staff on Academic Pathway 2, levels A or B (for example, Research Associates).
- Honorary and technical staff with relevant expertise and experience.

Schools and faculties should enable new supervisors to have a 'mentor' during their first few years in the role. Mentors must be established supervisors who have experience of supervising one or more research students to successful completion of their degree and who have a good understanding of the relevant University, faculty and school policies and procedures.

5.2.4 Supervision of joint or dual doctoral awards with staff from elsewhere

Arrangements for the supervision of joint or dual awards with staff from elsewhere are only permitted in cases where the University has a formal partnership agreement in place with the other institution/organisation, in line with the University's *policies on Dual and Joint Doctoral Awards*. In such cases, the main supervisor will be designated in accordance with the contractual obligations agreed with the partner institution/organisation in advance.

If a student is studying for a doctoral award at an affiliated institution, as defined in Ordinance 23, the main supervisor may be a member of staff of that institution with Honorary Academic Status at the University. In such cases, an academic member of staff from the University of Bristol will normally be appointed as co-supervisor. However, in exceptional circumstances, a suitably qualified member of staff from the affiliated institution may be appointed as co-supervisor with the permission of the Faculty PGR Director.

5.2.5 External supervision

For some research students it may be necessary to appoint an external supervisor to provide particular expertise within the supervisory team or if the research project involves a collaboration with an external organisation.

External supervisors will be based in, for example, professional practice or industry. Honorary staff at the University of Bristol are not deemed to be external supervisors. In addition, supervisors from other Higher Education Institutions appointed as part of joint or dual awards are not covered by this term (see Section 5.2.4 on supervision of joint or dual doctoral award with staff from elsewhere).

The role of the external supervisor is to complement the knowledge and expertise of the University of Bristol supervisors, and to provide a critical commentary on the planned research and on the work undertaken. Enabling access to facilities and/or other resources that would otherwise be unavailable to the student may also form part of the role.

An external supervisor may only be appointed where this is covered by a partnership agreement.

Where a research student has an external supervisor, the role of this supervisor within the team must be defined in the partnership agreement. External supervisors must be able to fulfil the University's expectations for the role and should have opportunities to engage in developmental and training activities.

If the main purpose of the role is to enable access to facilities and/or other resources, it may be more appropriate to organise a local support contact for the student, rather than appointing a formal external supervisor. A local support contact would not be part of the supervisory team, would not be involved in providing a critical commentary on the research, and would not have to be covered by a partnership agreement.

5.2.6 Training for supervisors

All new staff (Senior Lecturer/Lecturer or equivalent) will be required to complete a development session to support and prepare them for doctoral research supervision at Bristol. Existing staff are encouraged to undertake continued professional development.

5.3   Change of supervisor

5.3.1 Responsibility of the Head of School

The Head of School (or nominee) is responsible for ensuring that research students have continuous supervision during their period of registered study. If a supervisor is absent for an extended period, leaves the University, or if there is an irreconcilable breakdown in the supervisory relationship, the Head of School (or nominee) must ensure that adequate supervisory support is maintained, including putting alternative arrangements in place where appropriate.

Where a change of supervisor is required, the Head of School (or nominee) must keep the student informed throughout the process. Replacement supervisors must meet the criteria for appointment in Section 5.2.

The Head of School (or nominee) must take into account the requirements of any sponsors. Where a student is funded on a studentship attached to a particular supervisor or is on a specific research grant, it may not be possible to change supervisor. There may also be other circumstances where it is not feasible to change a supervisor.

In some circumstances, it may not be possible to identify a new supervisor for a student from within the University. If this is the case, the Head of School (or nominee) will explore options with the student.

5.3.2 Temporary unexpected absence of a supervisor

Where a supervisor is temporarily absent for an unexpected reason (for example, through illness), the Head of School (or nominee) must ensure that the research student continues to receive adequate supervision, which could include a new temporary arrangement for the duration of the absence. Students must be informed of their new first point of contact if it is their main supervisor who is unavailable.

Where the period of unexpected absence of a main supervisor is anticipated to exceed six months, the Head of School (or nominee) will normally appoint a permanent replacement or explore other options with the student.

5.3.3 Temporary planned absence of a supervisor

Where a supervisor has a planned temporary absence that prevents them from being reasonably accessible, the Head of School (or nominee) must ensure that the research student continues to receive adequate supervision. This could include a new temporary arrangement. Students must be informed of their new first point of contact if it is their main supervisor who is unavailable.

5.3.4 Breakdown in the supervisory relationship

If the relationship between a research student and their supervisor/s starts to break down, the Head of School (or nominee) will make available an alternative and independent source of advice to the student. In cases where the relationship suffers an irreconcilable breakdown, new supervisory arrangements or further options may be considered.

5.3.5 Requests to change supervisory arrangements

Supervisory responsibilities may be changed at the request of a research student or a supervisor to the Head of School (or nominee), who must take into account the requirements of any sponsors. Normally, any change of supervisor will be by mutual agreement between the student and the University.

5.3.6 Supervisors who move to other institutions

When a supervisor moves to another institution, the Head of School (or nominee) will explore the options available to the research student. This will take into account any sponsor requirements. It may be possible for co-supervision to continue at a distance, but the main supervisor must always meet the requirements set out in Section 5.2.2. Allocating a replacement supervisor from within the University may be the most appropriate action in these cases.

It is the responsibility of the Head of School (or nominee) to take all reasonable measures to appoint replacement supervisors or to facilitate supervision at a distance. In some circumstances however it may be more appropriate for the student to transfer to the supervisor's new institution.

5.3.7 Supervisors who leave

When a supervisor leaves the University but does not move to another institution (for example, through retirement), the Head of School (or nominee) will explore the options available to the research student, including whether there is an appropriate replacement supervisor.

It is possible however for retired members of staff to act as a co-supervisor for continuing students, as per Section 5.2.3.

6   Progress and review arrangements

6.1   Student performance and monitoring of progress

The University expects research students to make good progress in their studies and to complete their research within the normal study period for the award. The progress of research students is monitored to ensure that student completion rates remain high and in order to comply with statutory reporting to the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

All research students must be monitored in terms of attendance and performance and if, at any time, a student's progress is identified as being unsatisfactory, or the standard of their work is below that which is expected, the enhanced academic support process in Section 6.3 must be followed. If academic progress remains unsatisfactory, the procedure in Annex 3 will be initiated. The faculty must provide clear guidance on progress review processes and systems. The main supervisor must make the student aware of these requirements.

6.1.1 *Research degree programmes that contain a taught component*

The assessment, monitoring and progression requirements of any taught components that are part of a research degree programme must be clearly set out. The relevant sections of the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes* apply to the assessment of any taught components.

6.2   Annual progress review

The annual progress review gives research students the opportunity to engage in dialogue about their research and explore ideas with other academics. It should provide useful preparation for oral examinations and excellent training in academic discourse.

A student's personal and professional development should form a component of the review as a consideration of their whole progress and development. See also the *Personal and Professional Development Policy for Research Students* in Annex 12

Disabled students should be offered reasonable adjustments that take into account their disability for the purpose of assessment. Research students should be signposted to Disability Services for a Disability Support Summary, which will make recommendations for reasonable adjustments appropriate for the student in any assessment, such as progression processes, presentations, or the oral examination. Students and staff should contact Disability Services for advice about reasonable adjustments to assessment.

Continued registration for a research degree (doctoral and Masters) is conditional upon making satisfactory progress. The purpose of the mandatory annual progress review process is to establish that progress is satisfactory and, if not, to ensure that remedial action is taken promptly. Both full-time and part-time research students must be reviewed annually. The expectations for the annual progress of part-time students should be adjusted appropriately to reflect their part-time status.

Annual progress reviews vary from faculty to faculty, but must always involve:

- A written report or piece of work, and completion of a review form by the student.

- For at least one of the annual progress reviews in years one to three, a substantial piece of writing (e.g., draft chapter or report) should be submitted as a practice submission for text comparison checking through Turnitin. The Turnitin originality report should be included in the annual progress review documentation and discussed by the student with the annual progress review panel. Where there are contractual, security or safety concerns about sensitive material within a substantial written report, the main supervisor may decide that it is not appropriate for a submission to be made to Turnitin as part of the annual progress review. The decision must be recorded, and the supervisors must provide a manual check on academic integrity and appropriate referencing in these cases.

- An independent assessment of the submitted work and student's progress during the review period.

- Comments from both the student and the main supervisor.

All comments, feedback and recommendations arising from the annual progress review, including confirmation that the student has discussed the results of any text comparison check, will be evaluated by the School PGR Director (or nominee). Any participant in the process may escalate the review to the Faculty PGR Director for consideration if there is a significant concern to address.

The student will see and comment on the written report on their progress.

The normal outcome of the annual progress review is that the student progresses to the next year, either unconditionally or subject to the completion of specific targets.

In addition to these minimum University requirements, there may be subject-specific or programme requirements for satisfactory progress, especially if the student is funded by an external sponsor. A student and their main supervisor must discuss a sponsor's additional progress monitoring requirements at an early stage to ensure that these may be met in good time.

The University expects schools to set up a formal review of progress at least once a year, for three main purposes:

1. to ensure that the student is well supported and able to overcome any practical or academic obstacles to progress;

2. to enable the student or supervisor to communicate and explain any concerns about progress since the previous meeting; and

3. to encourage the student to reflect upon, and plan for, academic progress alongside their own personal and professional development.

6.3   Enhanced academic support

6.3.1 Introduction

Where there are concerns that are affecting a research student's academic progress, enhanced academic support within the school will be provided. Such support should be tailored to the individual and take into account any extenuating circumstances the student is experiencing. It may be appropriate to consider options such as suspension or part-time working.

If progress is still not satisfactory at the end of the period of enhanced academic support, the unsatisfactory academic progress procedure set out in Annex 3 will be initiated. Schools must ensure that students are made aware of this potential outcome when they enter into a period of enhanced academic support.

Written records must be kept of all informal and formal meetings at which a student's academic progress is considered and will be copied to all participants and filed securely in the school. Students will be invited to sign off action plans to indicate that they have seen and understood the plans. Where feasible, students should be informed of progress decisions in person, but if this is not possible it should be via their University email address. Failure by the student to agree records, to acknowledge progress decisions or to sign off an action plan will not delay the enhanced academic support process.

Unless the context indicates otherwise, references within this procedure to an office holder shall refer to that office holder or to a nominee. References to the supervisor shall be taken to mean the student's main supervisor or supervisory team, as appropriate. Where the student's main supervisor is the School PGR Director or Faculty PGR Director, a nominee will be appointed.

6.3.2 The enhanced academic support process

A supervisor, a reviewer, a PGR Programme Director or the School PGR Director (or, exceptionally, another academic) may raise concerns about the academic progress of a research student at any stage in the programme of study. (If there is any disagreement between the supervisor and others about these concerns, the matter should be referred to the School PGR Director or, exceptionally, to the Head of School for a decision.) As soon as the concern is confirmed, the supervisor must immediately make the student aware of the situation and notify the student and the School PGR Director in writing that enhanced academic support has commenced. The student should be invited to say if there are any extenuating circumstances.

The supervisor and research student will meet as soon as possible to draw up a plan of activities ("Plan 1") to be completed within the following three months (or six months for a part-time student). Plan 1 will include the activities and expected outputs, the likely frequency and duration of supervisory meetings, any other support that will be made available, and finally how progress will be assessed at the end of the period of enhanced academic support. The supervisor will then provide the student and the School PGR Director with a copy of Plan 1.

If at the end of the period specified in Plan 1, the supervisor and the School PGR Director agree that progress is now satisfactory, the supervisor will confirm this in writing to the student and the school and this procedure will immediately come to an end.

If at the end of the period specified in Plan 1, the supervisor and the School PGR Director agree that progress is still not satisfactory, the supervisor will notify the student and the Faculty PGR Director in writing, copied to the School PGR Director. This will initiate the unsatisfactory academic progress procedure set out in Annex 3.

If the supervisor and the School PGR Director are unable to agree on whether or not progress is satisfactory, they must refer the case to the Head of School for a decision.

The enhanced academic support process is summarised in the flowchart in Section 6.3.3

6.3.3 Flowchart of the enhanced academic support process.

1.1 Concerns are raised by an appropriate academic. Supervisor then notifies student and School PGR Director in writing that enhanced academic support has commenced. Any extenuating circumstances may be raised by the student.

1.2 Supervisor meets student as soon as possible to draw up action plan 1 to remedy position (*3 months full-time/6 months part-time permitted*).

1.3 Supervisor copies Plan 1 to student and School PGR Director.

1.4 Supervisor monitors progress against Plan 1 and reviews position at end of specified time with School PGR Director. Both must agree on progress made, or refer matter to Head of School for a decision.

Progress OK → Supervisor notifies school & student in writing that progress is now satisfactory**.** → **END**

Progress not OK → Supervisor notifies Faculty PGR Director and student in writing, copied to school, that progress is still unsatisfactory and that the case will therefore go to Annex 3. → **Go to Annex 3**

6.4   Interruptions and changes to study

Visa-holding students should seek advice on interruptions and changes to study from Student Visa Services.

6.4.1   Suspension of study

A suspension of study may be granted to research students who need to interrupt their studies. This is often because of circumstances largely beyond their control, for example ill-health, family or financial problems, but may also be agreed if the student wishes to take advantage of a specific career opportunity or for maternity, adoption, paternity and shared

parental leave. Periods of suspension must be as short as is necessary to address, or to take advantage of, the situation. Suspensions will not be backdated for more than one month.

The *Policy for Maternity, Adoption, Paternity and Shared Parental Leave for Research Students* is in Annex 14. The *Medical Absence Policy for Funded Research Students* (in Annex 15) may also be relevant for students who receive a maintenance stipend funded by the University of Bristol and/or by a UK Research Council.

Where a student has suspended on health grounds that are related to an existing disability or a new health condition, which is likely to last 12 months or more, the student should be signposted to Disability Services to discuss appropriate support. More broadly, students who have suspended should be encouraged to check the availability of support with individual services as there may be limited access to some areas of Student Services for suspended students.

Students approaching the end of a period of suspension that has been granted for health reasons may be required to produce a letter from a medical practitioner confirming that the student is fit to return to studies. If towards the end of a period of suspension the student is not fit to return to studies, they must apply for a further suspension of study before the first one ends.

When a suspension is approved, the research student's final submission date is modified (maximum period of study *plus* any previous suspensions or extensions *plus* the new period of suspension) and the student pauses their study during the suspension (see Section 4.3.1 for information on the maximum period of study). The deadline is changed but the amount of time for study is not increased.

The University's *Support to Study Policy* is a point of reference in this area. Support to study relates to an individual's capacity to participate fully and satisfactorily as a student, in relation to academic studies and life generally at the University.

6.4.2 Extension of study

Permission to extend the period of study may be granted in exceptional circumstances, with compelling reasons and support from the research student's supervisor and school, **provided application is made well before the final submission date** – except where there are unforeseen circumstances near the submission point and an emergency extension is required (see below)**.** Supervisors are required to review a student's progress no later than four months before the agreed intended submission date (see Section 5.1.2). The student should make a request for an extension, if required, shortly after this review.

The final submission date is the end of the maximum period of study plus any periods of approved suspension and/or extension. The intended submission date is the planned date for submission agreed by the supervisors and the student (see Section 9.2.2 on the timing of submission).

If there are unforeseen circumstances near the final submission date, a request may be made to the Faculty PGR Director for an emergency extension (see Section 6.4.4).

When an extension is approved, the research student's final submission date is modified (maximum period of study *plus* any previous suspensions or extensions *plus* the new period of extension) and the student continues to study during the extension (see Section 4.3.1 for information on the maximum period of study). An extension increases the period permitted for study.

An additional fee may be payable during the period of extension of studies.

6.4.3 *Suspensions, extensions, and the maximum completion period*

Periods of suspension and extension do not alter the maximum completion period (see Section 4.3.2). It is recommended that suspensions and extensions in total should leave at least 24 months for the examination process to be completed (including time for any required corrections) and for the award to be approved by the Research Degrees Examination Board. The recommendation of 24 months covers both full- and part-time students, as the mode of attendance is not a factor during the examination process.

The Faculty PGR Director will consider requests for suspensions and extensions where there are legitimate reasons but the implications for the maximum completion period will be taken into account in the decision. A request that takes the total period of suspensions and extensions into the final 24 months of the maximum completion period may risk undermining the time left for the examination process. The Faculty PGR Director may therefore decide not to approve a request on these grounds.

6.4.4 Approval of suspensions and extensions

Research students may request a suspension when they need to interrupt their studies. A suspension, which pauses study, must be for as short a period as necessary to meet the individual circumstances. The guidance in Section 6.4.1 provides more information.

Research students may request an extension in exceptional circumstances, which includes the option of an emergency extension near the final submission date. An extension, which increases the time taken to complete the degree, must be for the shortest period necessary. The guidance in Section 6.4.2 provides more information.

The Faculty PGR Director of the faculty in which the research student is registered may approve periods of suspension or extension of study.

The Faculty PGR Director must consider the implications for the research student's maximum completion period when approving requests for suspensions and extensions (see Section 6.4.3).

Requests for a suspension or extension, made on the appropriate form, must be accompanied by supporting evidence. Such evidence should include medical reports as appropriate, relevant correspondence and a work plan, including details of supervisory arrangements, covering the extra time requested. Medical evidence will be treated in confidence.

The request for a suspension or extension must be sent to the Faculty PGR Director. For complex cases, including those related to the Support to Study policy, the Faculty PGR Director may decide to refer the request to the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor (PGR) for a decision.

In addition, the Associate Pro-Vice Chancellor (PGR) has oversight of suspensions and extensions that exceed 12 months in total and will receive regular reports listing all new instances from each Faculty Office.

Emergency extensions

The Faculty PGR Director may approve an emergency extension if there are unforeseen circumstances near the final submission date. Emergency extensions will not usually exceed ten working days (which do not include University closure days) but may

> exceptionally be for longer if there are acute circumstances that warrant a longer period. Retrospective emergency extensions are permissible.

Any funding body rules on extensions and suspensions will be additional to those of the University. The student must ensure that, where relevant, the approval of any relevant funding body has been obtained before a suspension or extension is granted by the University.

6.4.5 Changes in mode of attendance

Research 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 however should not be considered unless medical evidence indicates that the change would be of assistance to the student. A suspension, as described in Section 6.4.1, would generally be more appropriate for ill health.

> A student undertaking a research degree programme may change their mode of attendance a maximum of twice during the programme. The Faculty PGR Director will consider requests beyond this maximum if there are exceptional circumstances.

A UK Research Council or other funding body would need to be informed of, and may need to give approval for, changes in the mode of attendance for a sponsored student. The University's regulation on changes to the mode of attendance is necessarily subordinated to the sponsor's conditions in those cases.

It is not possible for international students who are studying in the UK on a student visa (formally known as Tier 4) to study part-time and they must therefore be registered on a full-time degree.

7   Development of research and other skills

The University recognises the importance of the development of the research and generic skills of research students, both in order to increase their effectiveness as researchers during their studies and to underpin their subsequent careers. Training in research skills is the cornerstone of a research student's development, while transferable skills are widely recognised as essential in most forms of employment, including academia.

Faculties and schools may have different needs and therefore different approaches to analysing the training needs of a research student, but both the student and their supervisors will normally be involved. Supervisors have a fundamental role in encouraging their students to take up training and skills development opportunities and to apply the skills they have gained in their research work.

Training needs should be assessed at the beginning of study and reassessed at regular intervals during the research student's programme, including as part of the annual progress review. Research students should consider mapping and planning their personal and professional development activities.

Faculties and schools offer appropriate skills development programmes for their disciplines. Research skills and techniques depend on the student's research area, and this training is best delivered at a local level, with the student's supervisor playing a key role.

There are many opportunities for research students to attend skills development training that supports the successful completion of their programme. For example, see the central [Personal and Professional Development](#) programme.

7.1 The University's minimum requirements in respect of skills development are:

All research students will have access to training and development in research skills and techniques, normally provided by schools and faculties, and in generic skills through the University's Personal and Professional Development Programme.

From the start of a research degree programme onwards, the supervisors and student should regularly review the student's training needs together to identify relevant and appropriate opportunities, which may be within or external to the University. Students may require more guidance and support towards the start of their studies, with the expectation that the student will progressively take ownership of their own personal and professional development. See also the *Personal and Professional Development Policy for Research Students* in Annex 12.

Where a funding body has required specific training to be undertaken, the school, supervisor and student have responsibility, in accordance with the terms of the funding agreement, for ensuring that these requirements are met in a timely manner.

8   Student representation

Research students have a variety of opportunities for giving feedback on all aspects of their experience and are actively encouraged to engage with these.

All schools and faculties have mechanisms in place to allow research students to feed in their views and ideas. Collective feedback is often provided at school and/or faculty level through forums such as student/staff liaison committees or their equivalent. There may be a separate forum specifically for research students or this may be for postgraduates or all students in general. See also the *Code of Practice for Student Representation for Research Students*.

Research students are also invited to provide individual written feedback through programme, school or University questionnaires.

8.1 As a minimum, research students must be able to provide feedback on their experience through the following mechanisms:

At University level: through student representation on Senate, Education Committee and University PGR Committee, and through the opportunity to participate in regular surveys of research students and student forums.

At faculty level: through student representative membership at appropriate bodies and through contributing to forums enabling collective feedback about research student experiences.

At school level: through representative membership at appropriate bodies (such as student/staff liaison committees) and through the opportunity to express views in questionnaires and discussions with supervisors and other members of academic staff.

9 Assessment

9.1 The assessment process

The purpose of the assessment process is to ascertain whether candidates have reached the standard required by the criteria for the award set out in Annex 7 and in the regulations for the specific degree. Assessment must be operated fairly and consistently to ensure that the candidate has optimum opportunities to show their knowledge of the research topic and of the wider research field through the dissertation and the individual oral examination.

The assessment process set out here relates to the submission of the dissertation and the subsequent oral examination. Examiners make a preliminary assessment of the dissertation and conduct the oral examination. A recommendation from the examiners is then made to the Research Degrees Examination Board (RDEB), which makes the decisions about the award of research degrees. It is important that research students, supervisors and examiners understand that results recommended by examiners are provisional until approved by the RDEB. The RDEB may accept or revise the examiners' recommendation.

The Research Degrees Examination Board (RDEB) makes the decisions about the award of research degrees to assure consistency of academic standards across all faculties. Examiners may inform the candidate of their recommendation after the oral examination, but it must be made clear that the final decision rests with the RDEB, which may decide on a different result.

Supervisors must not contact examiners about the examination process beyond discussing the practical arrangements for the oral examination – which may cover any extenuating circumstances (see Section 9.4.6) – with the internal examiner or the Independent Chair (if appointed). Supervisors must not discuss the examiners' recommendation with examiners during any part of the examination process.

Some research degrees have a taught component that is assessed separately from the dissertation. Further information is available in the regulations for the specific degree (Annexes 1 and 2) and in the [programme specifications](#) for the degree.

9.2 Submission of the dissertation

Once a dissertation has been submitted, it is not permissible to make any alterations prior to the oral examination unless this is required as a result of the academic integrity and plagiarism review set out in Section 9.2.4 and Annex 8.

The dissertation must be submitted in accordance with Section 9.2.3. It is not permissible for the dissertation to be shared with examiners prior to the formal submission process without the consent of the Academic Quality and Policy Office.

9.2.1 *Content and format of the dissertation*

As set out in Section 5.1.2, responsibility for the content of the dissertation and the decision to submit the work rests with the candidate. Comments from supervisors in this process are advisory.

The dissertation shall be written in English, except for candidates in Modern Languages, who may submit their dissertations in the language of the culture studied. In all other cases, permission to use another language must be granted by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) or nominee at the request of the Faculty PGR Director. Whenever a dissertation is submitted in a language other than English, it must include an extended summary (approximately 5,000 words for a PhD dissertation) in English.

The dissertation must include a signed declaration stating how far the work contained in the dissertation is the candidate's own work and how far it has been conducted in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others.

It is permissible to integrate publications as chapters within the dissertation following discussion with supervisors and in line with the guidance set out in Annex 5.

Proofreading and the dissertation

Candidates have authorial responsibility for their dissertation and are encouraged to proofread their own work as this is an essential skill in academic writing. There may however be instances where it is appropriate for a candidate to seek assistance from a third party for proofreading as long as it does not alter the intellectual content of the dissertation. A third party may, for example, be a professional proofreader, another student, a friend or a family member.

Proofreading involves checking text and suggesting corrections for errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, formatting and presentation.

A third-party proofreader must not add to the content of the dissertation in any way, including through checking, amending or suggesting ideas, arguments, subject matter, or the structure of the dissertation, as this would compromise the authorship of the work.

A third-party proofreader may suggest corrections on the presentation of references that are poorly formatted but must not propose new references.

The candidate remains responsible for the content of the dissertation and must not accept advice from a third-party proofreader beyond the defined parameters. Failure to follow this requirement may constitute plagiarism.

There may however be cases where enhanced proofreading assistance has been approved as a reasonable adjustment for disability.

Guidance on the format of the dissertation, and an example of the declaration which must be included, are available at Annex 4.

A candidate must not submit as their dissertation work which they have already submitted for an academic award of the University of Bristol or of any other degree awarding body.

The dissertation must not exceed the maximum word count stated in the specific regulations for the degree. Unnecessary length of a dissertation may be to a candidate's disadvantage.

9.2.2 *Timing of submission*

The final submission date is the end of the maximum period of study plus any periods of approved suspension and/or extension and is the last day where a submission will be accepted (see Section 4.3).

The intended submission date is the planned date for submission agreed by the supervisors and the student. It is recommended that the intended submission date is earlier than the final submission date. The candidate should prepare a detailed timetable for final preparation and submission of the dissertation, in consultation with their supervisors, at least six months before their intended submission date.

The dissertation may be submitted at any time between three months before the end of the minimum period of study and the final submission date (unless stated otherwise in the regulations for the specific degree). Any submissions made more than three months before the end of the minimum period of study require prior approval by the Faculty PGR Director. Early submission will not affect liability for tuition fees.

The dissertation must be submitted on or before the final submission date or the student will be deemed to have withdrawn due to lapse of time. Dissertations submitted after the final submission date will not be examined.

Where the final submission date falls when the University is closed (e.g. weekends, bank holidays and closure days), the submission should be on the next working day.

If there are unforeseen circumstances near the final submission date, a request may be made to the Faculty PGR Director for an emergency extension (see Section 6.4).

9.2.3 *Method of submission*

Candidates must submit two electronic copies of their dissertation:

1 – The examination copy. An electronic copy of the dissertation must be sent to the Academic Quality and Policy Office (see guidance on how to submit). This copy counts as the formal submission and must be received on or before the candidate's final submission date (see Section 9.2.2) Where the dissertation incorporates physical material, such as creative works, the candidate must make special arrangements with the Academic Quality and Policy Office for the submission.

2 – The Turnitin copy. An electronic copy of the dissertation must be uploaded to Turnitin so that the pre-examination requirement for an academic integrity and plagiarism review of the text can be completed (see Section 9.2.4).

In exceptional circumstances, where there are contractual, security or safety obligations, the student and/or the main supervisor may make a request for an exemption from the

Turnitin requirement, initially to the Faculty PGR Director. The Faculty PGR Director will make a recommendation to the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR), via the Academic Quality and Policy Office. Where the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR) has approved the request, the supervisors will undertake a manual check on the dissertation in relation to academic integrity and plagiarism.

The dissertation will be sent to approved examiners when the required academic integrity and plagiarism review has been successfully completed and the examination copy has been submitted.

Examiners will be sent an electronic copy of the dissertation and may request a printed copy from the Academic Quality and Policy Office.

The dissertation, in electronic or printed form, must only be sent to the examiners by, or at the specific request of, the Academic Quality and Policy Office.

9.2.4 *Checking for plagiarism*

An academic integrity and plagiarism review forms part of the submission process for all dissertations. Section 2.3 provides an overview of the University's approach to academic integrity.

A dissertation must not include:

(1) Plagiarism, which is claiming the work of others, intentionally or by omission, as one's own.

(2) The re-use of one's own published work *without* acknowledgement.
Research students are strongly encouraged to publish their work, including prior to submission and examination, but there must be appropriate referencing if this published work is included – in whole or in part – in their dissertation. In some cases, it may be appropriate to integrate publications as chapters within the dissertation, as set out in Annex 5.

(3) The re-use of one's own unpublished work from an earlier award or assignment *without* acknowledgement.
Research students considering the inclusion of previously submitted work in their dissertation must discuss this with their supervisors, as a piece of work must not receive credit multiple times. Any re-use of submitted work must be limited and clearly referenced, including the identification of any previous award.

All dissertations are subject to an academic integrity and plagiarism review. Annex 8 sets out the procedure for the review, including the steps to take where the nominated reviewer suspects plagiarism or where plagiarism or other transgressions in academic integrity are suspected during or after the assessment process.

9.2.5 *Deferred public access to the dissertation*

At any time before the submission of the final dissertation, the candidate or the main supervisor may request deferred public access to their dissertation in whole or in part. The candidate will normally make the initial request; the main supervisor will only take the lead if there are contractual, security or safety obligations that require the supervisor's direction. A deferral request must specify a reasonable period to meet the specific circumstances, such as preparing for publication, commercial confidentiality or individual sensitivities. Deferrals may be subject to funder and/or sponsor conditions.

A deferral will relate to the content of the dissertation; the metadata (name, title and abstract) will be made available even where a deferral has been granted.

All requests to defer access must specify the reason and include a recommendation by the Faculty PGR Director. There is guidance and a corresponding application form.

Where a partial deferral has been requested, the request must detail how the candidate, the supervisors and, if relevant, the industrial partner will manage the redaction process. A cover sheet will be required for the redacted dissertation with a statement on the redactions agreed by the candidate, supervisors and any industrial sponsors (see Annex 4).

Any relevant contractual, security or safety obligations (including those that relate to UK export control considerations) should be itemised as part of the request. In exceptional circumstances where there is a clear rationale, a request for the final version of the dissertation to be held on a University server – rather than on Pure, the standard depository platform – for the deferral period may be included.

Deferrals of up to twelve months will be granted on the recommendation of the Faculty PGR Director. For requests for deferrals of over twelve months, the final decision rests with the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR).

Even if a request for deferment is granted, copies of the final form of the dissertation must still be submitted as described in Section 9.6.2. Where a partial deferment has been granted, both the redacted and full versions must be submitted.

The candidate, the main supervisor or, if relevant, an industrial partner may make a request for an extension to a deferral period to the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR), via the Academic Quality and Policy Office. Extension requests will be made on the appropriate form.

9.3 Examiners

9.3.1 *Role of examiners*

The competence and independence of examiners is of fundamental importance to the integrity of the assessment process and in maintaining the academic standards of the University's research degrees.

In keeping with the importance that the University attaches to oral examinations being conducted fairly and consistently, examiners are invited to comment on the examination

process in confidence to the Research Degrees Examination Board. There is also a section on the Examiners' Joint Report Form for the internal examiner to complete on the conduct of the examination. If an Independent Chair has been appointed, they will complete a separate report on the conduct of the examination.

> The examiners are jointly responsible for ensuring that the requirements for the assessment process in these Regulations and Code and in the regulations for the degree are followed.
>
> Examiners should treat the candidate's work with strict confidence.

External examiner

The main function of the external examiner is to assure that the academic standards of the research degrees awarded by the University are comparable with those at similar institutions. The external examiner normally takes the lead in the discussion of the candidate's work during the oral examination.

Internal examiner

The internal examiner participates fully in the examination process and acts as the examination co-ordinator, including:

- making arrangements for the oral examination in consultation with the School PGR Director;
- informing the candidate, the supervisor, any other individuals involved in the oral examination, and the Academic Quality and Policy Office of the time and place of the oral examination;
- giving the candidate at least ten days' notice in writing;
- ensuring, as required, that the candidate receives the examiners' list of suggested corrections; and
- ensuring that examiners' reports are submitted to the School PGR Director in accordance with the University's requirements.

Where an Independent Chair has been appointed because there is an inexperienced internal examiner (see below), the internal examiner will normally act as the examination co-ordinator with support and guidance from the Independent Chair.

Independent Chair

An Independent Chair will be appointed:

a) where there are only external examiners;
b) where any member of the examining panel is inexperienced; or
c) where the Faculty PGR Director considers that the presence of an academic with extensive experience would assist in ensuring that the examination is fair and conducted in accordance with the University's regulations for the award being examined.

An examiner is deemed to be inexperienced if they have not completed the examination of at least two research degree candidates. The prior experience required to perform the role of the Independent Chair will typically be higher.

The Independent Chair will act as the examination co-ordinator where there are there is no internal examiner. Where an internal examiner has been appointed, the Independent Chair will provide support and guidance on the co-ordination role to the internal examiner, if required.

The Faculty PGR Director will ensure that the candidate is aware that an Independent Chair will be appointed.

To be appointed, the Independent Chair must:

   a) be an academic member of staff at the University of Bristol;
   b) have a good understanding of the University's procedures and regulations for the award being examined; and
   c) have extensive experience of oral examinations as an examiner.

The Independent Chair must not have had any prior involvement with the project or with the candidate.

An Independent Chair is not expected to read the dissertation in preparation for the examination. They must however receive copies of the examiners' preliminary reports and must preside over discussions concerning issues raised in those reports and the plans for conducting the oral examination. An Independent Chair may make a request to the Academic Quality and Policy Office to have access to an electronic copy of the dissertation for reference if this will assist them in undertaking their role.

An Independent Chair oversees the oral examination and the deliberations of the examiners in reaching their recommendation. In the case of disagreement between the examiners, the Chair is confined to advising the examiners on their options and should use their best endeavours to assist the examiners in reaching agreement. The Independent Chair does not have a casting vote.

Where there is no internal examiner, the Independent Chair's responsibility includes the administrative activities for the examination, including on any required corrections. In these cases, the candidate may make a request for clarification of corrections to the Independent Chair who is permitted to contact the examiners once for this purpose. The Independent Chair must also ensure that corrections are approved when there is no internal examiner.

> The Independent Chair must complete a report after the oral examination to confirm that it was conducted in accordance with the University's regulations for the award being examined.

9.3.2 *Selection of examiners*

> During the preparation of the dissertation, the candidate and their supervisors must agree on the intended submission date and discuss possible examiners (see Section 5.1.2). The main

supervisor must propose suitable examiners to the School PGR Director no later than three months before the agreed intended submission date, using the [appointment form](#).

The School PGR Director agrees, and the Faculty PGR Director approves, the examiners for research degree candidates. Both the School PGR Director and the Faculty PGR Director must be assured of the competence and independence of the examiners selected. Where the School PGR Director has a close link to candidate – for example, if they are a supervisor, a proposed examiner, or a proposed Independent Chair – the Head of School or another senior member of academic staff in the school must agree the appointment of the examiners.

If there are unresolved concerns about the appointment of an examiner or examiners, the main supervisor must propose a new examiner or examiners.

The criteria to be used when selecting external and internal examiners for research degrees are:

The examining panel

- Two or more examiners will be appointed, at least one being external to, and independent of, the University, and one normally being a member of the academic staff of the University.
- Under specific circumstances, e.g. where required by the nature of the research undertaken or the nature of the award, it may be appropriate to appoint a second external examiner.
- Examiners are normally expected to hold a research degree at the level being examined or have other relevant expertise. It is not permissible for an individual who is registered for a research degree to be an examiner.
- Examiners are deemed to be inexperienced if they have not completed the examination of at least two research degree candidates. An Independent Chair will be appointed where any of the examining panel is inexperienced.
- The examiners between them (and including the Independent Chair if appointed) must have adequate experience of examining research degrees for the same type of programme as that leading to the candidate's intended award.

Internal examiners

- Internal examiners will normally be a non-probationary member of academic staff at the University of Bristol holding an open contract of employment of at least 0.5FTE.
- Exceptionally, an honorary, visiting or emeritus member of academic staff who meets the other selection criteria may be appointed as an internal examiner, but this would usually be with the appointment of an Independent Chair to ensure that the examination is conducted in accordance with the University's regulations for the award being examined.
- Internal examiners must not have any connection with the candidate, the research project or the supervisors that might impair their ability to make a fair and impartial assessment of the candidate's work.
- Where the proposed internal examiner has participated in an annual progress review for the candidate, the Faculty PGR Director must be satisfied that the level of involvement with the research project has not impaired independence of judgement.
- The internal examiner must understand the requirements of the University's regulations that apply to the award unless an Independent Chair is appointed to cover this requirement.

Internal examiners from partner institutions

- Academics from institutions that are part of collaborative partnerships or centres with the University may perform the role of internal examiner, if this is specified in a partnership agreement. Where this approach is used, there must be an Independent Chair or a further internal examiner who meets the standard selection criteria.
- Where a partnership agreement specifies that academics from partner institutions may act as the internal examiner, it is not permissible for academics from those institutions to be appointed as external examiners for candidates linked to the collaborative partnership or centre.
- A minimum period of five years must have elapsed before an academic who held a post at a partner institution with this type of agreement may be nominated as an external examiner for candidates linked to the relevant collaborative partnership or centre.

External examiners

- The external examiner must have the required expertise in the candidate's subject area.
- External examiners must not have any connection with the candidate, the research project, the supervisors or the University that might impair their ability to make a fair and impartial assessment of the candidate's work.
- Emeritus members of staff from other universities may perform the role of external examiner if they are still appropriately active in the field.
- University of Bristol honorary, visiting and emeritus staff cannot be external examiners but may exceptionally act as internal examiners (see above).
- A minimum period of five years must have elapsed before anybody who has held a post at the University, including in honorary or visiting roles, may be nominated as an external examiner.
- To ensure that familiarity does not prejudice objective judgement, an individual must not be appointed as an external examiner more than twice a year by the University. Exceptions to this are permissible for external examiners of Masters degrees by research where this has been approved (see Section 9.3.3). The Faculty PGR Director must agree any other exceptions to this limit.
- It is important to ensure that there are no reciprocal arrangements with other institutions to provide examiners.

External examiners from partner institutions

- Faculties have discretion in the selection of external examiners from other institutions that are part of collaborative partnerships or centres with the University as long as there are no connections to the student, project, supervisor, University or the collaborative partnership/centre that might impair, or call into question, the fair and impartial assessment of the candidate's work.
- Where a partnership agreement specifies that an academic from partner institutions may act as the internal examiner, it is not permissible for academics from those partner institutions to be appointed as external examiners for candidates linked to the collaborative partnership or centre.
- A minimum period of five years must have elapsed before an academic who held a post at a partner institution with this type of agreement may be nominated as an external examiner for candidates linked to the relevant collaborative partnership or centre.

Candidates who are members of staff

- Where the candidate is a member of staff of the University, two external examiners will be appointed, unless approval has been obtained from the Faculty PGR Director to appoint an external and an internal examiner.
- The Faculty PGR Director will determine whether there are any potential conflicts of interest or any other reason that could undermine the impartiality of the internal examiner before granting approval. This consideration will include candidates who may become members of staff prior to the award of the degree.

Independent Chairs

- An Independent Chair may be appointed to oversee an examination, but they are not an examiner.
- The appointment of an Independent Chair is required where there are only external examiners, where any member of the examining panel is inexperienced, or where the Faculty PGR Director considers that an academic with extensive experience is required to oversee the examination.
- An examiner is deemed to be inexperienced if they have not completed the examination of at least two research degree candidates. The prior experience required to perform the role of the Independent Chair will typically be higher, with the Faculty PGR Director deciding on the level of experience required from the Independent Chair based on the individual situation.
- An Independent Chair must be an academic member of staff at the University of Bristol who has a good understanding of the University's procedures and regulations for the award and who has extensive experience of oral examinations as an examiner.
- An Independent Chair must not have any significant connections with the candidate or the research project.
- The Independent Chair oversees the oral examination and the deliberations of the examiners, including receiving the examiners' preliminary reports and presiding over the discussion of those reports and the plans for conducting the oral examination. The Independent Chair will participate in the oral examination only insofar as is needed to advise the examiners on the University's relevant regulations and procedures. The Independent Chair is not an examiner.

9.3.3 *Appointment of external examiners for Masters degrees by research for multiple examinations*

As for the examination of all research degrees, at least one external examiner who has relevant expertise must be appointed for each candidate. Where deemed appropriate by the Faculty PGR Director, external examiners for Masters degrees by research may be appointed for a three-year period with an allowance to examine a maximum of 15 students within those three years. This approach is appropriate where, for example, there are cohort-based programmes or where there are many students within a specific area.

An initial appointment for each external examiner who has been selected to serve for three years will be approved by the Faculty PGR Director. Several external examiners may be appointed at the same time to cover a specific programme or area, if required.

Examiners will be selected for individual candidates through the standard procedure and form. Where an external examiner with a three-year appointment is selected, this will be

identified on the form. There will therefore be a two-stage selection: the general appointment for the three-year period and the specific appointment in relation to an individual candidate. The criterion that the external examiner has relevant expertise is a primary consideration in the individual appointment.

It is not permissible for an external examiner appointed for a three-year period to be re-appointed to this role at the University for at least five years after their period of appointment has ended.

9.4 The Oral Examination

9.4.1 The requirement for an oral examination

Assessment of all research degrees includes an individual oral examination, unless permission for exemption has been granted by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) or nominee.

The oral examination is normally conducted within four months of submission of the dissertation.

9.4.2 The role of the oral examination

Examiners should discuss with the candidate the strengths as well as any weaknesses of the candidate's work. The oral examination enables the examiners to:

▪ question the candidate on the substance of the work submitted;

▪ assess the ability of the candidate to present and defend intellectual arguments;

▪ assess the candidate's general knowledge and understanding of the discipline and of the relevant literature; and

▪ verify that the work submitted is the candidate's own and assess the extent of any collaboration.

9.4.3 Preparation

The candidate should be provided with suitable opportunities to practise for the oral examination by their school through, for example, presenting and being questioned about their research.

Examiners (and the Independent Chair if appointed) will normally meet before the start of the oral examination to discuss the issues identified in their preliminary reports and to plan how they will conduct the oral examination (for further information about examiners' preliminary reports see Section 9.5.1). Examiners may write on the examined work (e.g. to indicate minor errors).

The candidate, the candidate's supervisors, the School PGR Director and the examiners should avoid any action in the period leading up to the examination that might impair the ability of the examiners to make an impartial assessment of the candidate's work.

None of the examiners should be asked to comment on drafts of the candidate's work prior to the examination.

Candidates must not contact the external examiner for any reason and may contact the internal examiner (or the Independent Chair if appointed) with regard to their examination only to discuss the practical arrangements.

Examiners should not meet the candidate's supervisors prior to the examination.

The candidate's supervisors must not contact the external examiner on any matter relating to the examination and may contact the internal examiner (or the Independent Chair if appointed) only in respect of any special arrangements required for the oral examination.

9.4.4 Observers

A request for observers to attend an oral examination, which requires the agreement of the candidate and the examiners, must be approved by the School PGR Director and the Faculty PGR Director. Observers may be the candidate's supervisors or other persons.

Observers must not contribute to discussion during the oral examination. Observers normally do not see the preliminary reports and must normally withdraw before the examiners begin to consider their recommendations. The only exception permitted for an observer to see the preliminary reports and to be present for the examiners' discussion following the oral examination is where an inexperienced academic who has no close links to the candidate wishes to gain knowledge of the full examination process.

There is a clear distinction between an observer, as described in this section, and an Independent Chair as set out in Section 9.3.1.

9.4.5 Reasonable adjustments to the assessment of research students with disabilities

Disabled students should be offered reasonable adjustments that take into account their disability for the purpose of assessment. Research students should be signposted to Disability Services for a Disability Support Summary, which will make recommendations for reasonable adjustments appropriate for the student in any assessment, such as progression processes, presentations, or the oral examination. Students and staff should contact [Disability Services](#) for advice about reasonable adjustments to assessment.

9.4.6 Extenuating circumstances

Extenuating circumstances are circumstances external to study within the University that a student believes may affect their performance in assessment.

Candidates, their supervisors and the School PGR Director share the responsibility for making examiners (and the Independent Chair if appointed) aware of any extenuating circumstances that need to be taken into consideration during the conduct of the oral examination. Where appropriate, a written statement supported by relevant evidence should be provided, via the Academic Quality and Policy Office, before the dissertation is submitted.

Any extenuating circumstances that might affect the candidate's performance in the oral examination should be brought to the attention of the internal examiner (or the Independent

Chair if appointed) as early as possible, normally not later than one month before the oral examination. It is however recognised that in some cases extenuating circumstances may emerge closer to the examination. Examiners will make appropriate adjustments to the conduct of the examination, seeking specialist advice where required.

9.4.7 Special arrangements

The Faculty PGR Director may, with the agreement of the candidate, approve special arrangements for conducting the oral examination, such as recording it.

Requests, with appropriate justification, should be addressed to the Faculty PGR Director and must be approved prior to the start of the oral examination.

Schools may seek agreement from the Faculty PGR Director for the regular use of such arrangements.

All participants must be informed in advance if the intention is to record an oral examination, and any objections must be considered by the Faculty PGR Director. At the oral examination, all participants must be notified that recording will take place prior to the start of the recording. The recording must stop at the formal close of the oral examination.

Files of recordings should be stored on secure University servers with access limited only to those who have a need to access the recordings. The University's *Information Handling Policy* must be complied with at all times. Recordings must be retained for a reasonable period after the oral examination and must be securely disposed of at the end of the retention period.

9.4.8 Location of the viva

The oral examination with the candidate and all the examiners normally takes place at the University of Bristol.

An online oral examination by video link with one or more remote participants may be held where the candidate and examiners agree to this approach and with School PGR Director and Faculty PGR Director approval. Annex 6 contains guidance for online oral examinations.

An oral examination with the candidate and all the examiners may take place in a physical location outside of the University of Bristol where the candidate and examiners agree to this approach and with School PGR Director and Faculty PGR Director approval.

The School PGR Director and the Faculty PGR Director must be confident that the candidate will not be disadvantaged in an oral examination held online or at a physical location outside of the University of Bristol before giving approval.

9.4.9 Conduct of the oral examination

All participants in the oral examination are expected to behave with respect, courtesy and academic integrity towards those present. The oral examination should be conducted in an appropriate and professional manner.

The oral examination must be conducted in English. In the case of a candidate in Modern Languages who has submitted a dissertation in a language other than English, the oral examination must be conducted in English, unless the Faculty PGR Director has agreed a

request from the candidate and the examiners to conduct the oral examination in the language of the culture studied.

The examiners are jointly responsible for ensuring that the oral examination is performed fairly, taking account of any special circumstances that they have been made aware. Examiners should return the examined dissertation or published work to the candidate as soon as possible after the end of the examination.

9.5 Assessment Outcomes

9.5.1 *Examiners' reports*

Prior to the oral examination, the examiners each complete an independent preliminary report in English. A joint report is then completed after the oral examination. Examiners' report forms are available [online](#).

Reports should, where appropriate, include discussion of the:
- (a) purpose of the research and the overall approach taken;
- (b) candidate's application of research methods;
- (c) candidate's review of the literature;
- (d) extent of any collaboration;
- (e) candidate's contribution to the advancement of knowledge in the subject represented;
- (f) suitability for publication of the work reported;
- (g) literary form and quality of presentation of the work submitted, and the inferences that can be drawn about the candidate's ability to present and defend intellectual arguments in writing;
- (h) candidate's general knowledge of the subject; and
- (i) candidate's performance in the oral examination, and the inferences that can be drawn about the candidate's ability to present and defend intellectual arguments verbally.

Each examiner must complete an independent preliminary report on the dissertation (or published work) before the oral examination, noting areas that should be explored with the candidate during the examination. Examiners must exchange their preliminary reports in advance of the oral examination.

The preliminary reports must be completed in English.

The examiners' judgement is based both on the work presented by the candidate and on the candidate's performance in the oral examination. Examiners should refer to the criteria for research degrees set out in Annex 7 and in the regulations for the degree in question to ascertain the standard required.

If an Independent Chair has been appointed, they must complete a report on the conduct of the examination. Similar information is collected from the internal examiner on the Examiners' Joint Final Report for examinations where there is no Independent Chair.

9.5.2 *Examiner Recommendations*

If the examiners have agreed on a recommendation, they may make this known to the candidate, but they must make it clear that the final decision rests with the RDEB, which may arrive at a different verdict.

After the oral examination, the examiners must complete a joint report that sets out clearly their recommendation with its supporting rationale. The joint report must be completed in English.

Examiners may recommend that:

A   The degree sought be awarded unconditionally.

B   The degree sought be awarded subject to the correction of minor errors to the satisfaction of the internal examiner. In examinations where there is no internal examiner, an external examiner, the Independent Chair, or another University of Bristol academic nominated by the School will perform this role.

C   The degree sought be awarded once errors or omissions of substance have been corrected to the satisfaction of the examiners.

D   The degree sought not be awarded but that the candidate be permitted to re-submit a revised form of the dissertation or published work for examination.

E   *(doctoral candidates only)* The relevant degree of Master by research be awarded unconditionally.

F   *(doctoral candidates only)* The relevant degree of Master by research be awarded, subject to the correction of minor errors to the satisfaction of the internal examiner. In examinations where there is no internal examiner, an external examiner, the Independent Chair, or another University of Bristol academic nominated by the School will perform this role.

G   *(doctoral candidates only)* No degree be awarded but that the candidate be permitted to re-submit a revised form of the dissertation or published work for examination for the relevant degree of Master by research.

H   No degree be awarded and permission be not granted to re-submit the dissertation or published work.

Award of the degree of Master by research (doctoral candidates only)

A Masters degree is not to be awarded merely because the dissertation has failed to reach the requirements for the award of a doctoral level degree. Examiners should only recommend the award of a Masters degree when the dissertation and oral exam meet the criteria for a Masters degree by research as specified in Annex 7.

If the conclusions of the examiners' joint report differ significantly from those of any of the preliminary reports, the examiners should justify the changes in their joint report.

If, exceptionally, the examiners cannot agree on a joint report after the oral examination, they should submit separate final reports.

9.5.3 *Corrections*

The candidate should receive written guidance on any corrections as soon as possible after the oral examination. They may meet with the internal examiner on one occasion or may

alternatively seek one e-mail response from the internal examiner to clarify the changes required by the examiners. In cases where there is no internal examiner, the candidate may make a request for clarification of corrections to the Independent Chair who is permitted to contact the examiners once for this purpose. Any further clarification and advice should be sought from the candidate's supervisors (see Section 5.1.2 on the expectations of supervisory support for corrections).

The time allowed for correction of errors of substance or for resubmission is irrespective of whether the candidate was previously registered as a full-time or part-time student. If, in exceptional circumstances, a candidate requires an extension of the agreed period, they must make an application in writing to the RDEB, via the Academic Quality and Policy Office, indicating their reasons and providing supporting evidence if appropriate, and stating a date by which the corrections will be made or the dissertation resubmitted.

Minor errors

Annex 9 sets out guidance on what constitutes minor errors in a dissertation. Examiners should make clear what, if any, corrections are required. **Annex 10** provides information on the guidance examiners should provide on corrections and resubmissions.

Where there are numerous instances of errors that are individually minor but when taken together are deemed by the examiners to form a significant undertaking for the candidate to correct, a recommendation of errors of substance may be made.

Minor corrections should be submitted within **28 days** of the notification from the Research Degrees Examination Board at which the examiners' reports are considered.

The internal examiner is responsible for notifying the candidate and the Academic Quality and Policy Office in writing when the minor errors have been satisfactorily completed. In cases where there is no internal examiner, minor corrections must be approved by one of the following: (1) an external examiner, (2) the Independent Chair, or (3) another University of Bristol academic nominated by the School. The Independent Chair is responsible for ensuring that approval from any of these sources is reported in writing to the candidate and to the Academic Quality and Policy Office.

If confirmation of the satisfactory completion of minor corrections are not received by the Academic Quality and Policy Office, the candidate will be entitled to attend a degree congregation, but the degree certificate will be withheld until written confirmation is received.

Errors of substance

If substantial errors or omissions are to be corrected, examiners must provide clear written guidance for the candidate as soon as possible after the oral examination. A copy of the guidance must be attached to the examiners' final report. **Annex 10** provides information on the guidance examiners should provide on corrections and resubmissions.

Candidates are not permitted to contact the external examiner but may contact the internal examiner once for clarification of the revisions required. In cases where there is no internal examiner, candidates may make a request for clarification of corrections to the Independent Chair who is permitted to contact the examiners once for this purpose. The time permitted for corrections for all candidates is normally **six months** from the date of the meeting of the RDEB at which the decision is made. In exceptional circumstances, an extension beyond this period may be granted by the RDEB.

If the student has submitted the corrected dissertation within the deadline but the examiners are not satisfied with the corrections, the examiners may agree to allow up to four additional weeks for the candidate to make further, minor modifications. The additional period will start when the examiners have sent their further comments to the candidate. The internal examiner (or Independent Chair where there is no internal examiner) must inform the Academic Quality and Policy Office of the additional time given.

A dissertation corrected for errors of substance will not be accepted if it is submitted after the time permitted, in which case candidature for the degree will lapse.

The internal examiner must inform the Academic Quality and Policy Office, in writing, of the satisfactory completion of the correction of errors of substance to the satisfaction of all examiners. In cases where there is no internal examiner, the Independent Chair must co-ordinate the response from the external examiners to confirm that the corrections are approved.

9.5.4 *Resubmission*

If a candidate is required to resubmit their dissertation for re-examination, examiners must provide clear and comprehensive written guidance for the candidate. A copy of the guidance must be attached to the examiners' final report. **Annex 10** provides information on the guidance examiners should provide on corrections and resubmissions.

Apart from contacting the internal examiner, once only, for clarification of the revisions required, the candidate may not contact the examiners for any reason in connection with the examination. In cases where there is no internal examiner, candidates may make a request for clarification of the revisions required to the Independent Chair who is permitted to contact the examiners once for this purpose.

Supervisors will provide continued guidance to candidates who are required to resubmit. The level of support will be determined by the nature and extent of the work required by the examiners and must meet the expectations of supervisory support for a resubmission (see Section 5.1.2).

Resubmission can take place once only. The maximum time permitted for resubmission for all candidates is normally **12 months** from the date of the meeting of the RDEB at which the decision is made. An extension beyond this period may be granted by the RDEB only in exceptional circumstances. A revised dissertation will not be accepted if submitted after the time permitted, in which case candidature for the degree will lapse.

To resubmit, the candidate must submit an examination copy and a Turnitin copy, as per Section 9.2.3, within the period specified by the RDEB and must pay the resubmission fee. Unless determined otherwise by the RDEB, the original examiners will be asked to undertake a full re-examination, normally including a further oral examination.

If, once the examiners have read the resubmitted work, the examiners agree that no purpose would be served by holding a further oral examination and that the work is worthy of the award of the degree for which the work has been submitted (with or without correction of minor errors), they have the discretion to waive the second oral examination. The examiners' reports should include an explanation of why the examiners felt that a further oral examination was unnecessary.

The examiners should provide a complete new set of examiners' reports to RDEB. This will include a report from the Independent Chair (if appointed). External examiners will be paid a re-examination fee.

9.5.5 The procedure following the oral examination

Examiners' preliminary and joint reports are confidential until they have been considered by the RDEB. Reports must not be shared with the candidate or supervisors prior to RDEB.

After consideration by RDEB, the reports (including any Independent Chair reports and other documentation considered by the Board) are sent to the candidate and to the main supervisor.

The internal examiner (or the Independent Chair if appointed) should forward all examiners' reports, including the pre-oral examination preliminary reports, to the School PGR Director, via the School Office, for countersigning the joint final report. The School Office should then forward the reports to the Academic Quality and Policy Office. The report from the Independent Chair (if appointed) on the conduct of the examination should be included with the examiners' reports. Where the School PGR Director has a close link to candidate – for example, if they are a supervisor, an examiner, or the Independent Chair – the Head of School or another senior member of academic staff in the school must sign the joint final report.

The approval process by RDEB is set out in Section 9.6.

Reports should be sent to the Academic Quality and Policy Office to arrive within **14** days of the date of the oral examination.

9.6 Results

9.6.1 *Approval of recommendations*

The Examiners' recommendation is provisional until approved by the RDEB. The RDEB has the authority to agree, alter or reject the result recommended by the examiners.

The examiners' independent preliminary reports, their joint report and, where relevant, the report on the taught element of the degree must be sufficient to enable the RDEB to assess the scope and significance of the work submitted by the candidate and to determine whether the candidate satisfies the University's criteria for the award of the research degree. The RDEB also receives the report from the Independent Chair (if appointed) on the conduct of the examination.

The examiners' reports will be considered at the next practicable RDEB held after their receipt. Reports received less than two weeks before the date of the Board will not normally be considered until the following meeting. Dates of meetings of the RDEB and deadlines for receipt of reports are available online.

The result of their examination will be sent to candidates by email and post normally within two weeks of the RDEB's decision.

9.6.2 *Requirements for submission of the final dissertation or published work*

Candidates must submit an electronic copy of the final dissertation through the Pure website for public access (see guidance webpages). Candidates must submit their final dissertation or published work within 28 calendar days of their award date, or, where there are outstanding minor errors, within 28 calendar days following confirmation of the satisfactory completion of their corrections. Guidance on the formatting is available in Annex 4.

It is permissible to make a request for deferred access to the dissertation (see Section 9.2.5), but the final dissertation must be submitted as normal. Where a partial deferment has been granted, both the redacted and full versions are required. A cover sheet must be integrated into the redacted version with a statement on the redactions agreed by the candidate, supervisors and any industrial sponsors (see Annex 4).

In exceptional circumstances, where this has been approved by the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR), the deferred dissertation will be held on a University server – rather than on Pure, the standard depository platform – during the deferral period. In these cases, a mediated submission process will be used.

The electronic copy should be in pdf format (or other format acceptable to the University and appropriate to the medium), as agreed with supervisors and should normally be identical to the examined version except where any materials which risk breaching a third party's copyright or privacy require redaction from the publicly available copy. Where there are contractual, security or safety obligations, a request for a full or partial deferral must be made (see Section 9.2.5). See depositing guidance webpages for more information.

The dissertation will not appear in the repository until it has been approved by the Academic Quality and Policy Office and the Library.

Degree certificates are made available after degree ceremonies. The degree certificate will be withheld until the candidate has complied with the requirements for submission of the definitive form of the dissertation or published work and commentary as set out above.

10   Student appeals and complaints

10.1   Appeals

A research student may appeal against the decision of a Dean to terminate or change their registration or a decision of the Research Degrees Examination Board in respect of a decision relating to the award of a research degree.

10.2   Academic appeal procedure for research students

The procedure governing appeals against a decision made by a Dean relating to termination or change of registration or of a decision made by the Research Degrees Examination Board relating to the award of a research degree is set out in the Examination Regulations. No degree may be conferred while an appeal is outstanding.

10.3   Student Complaints

The student complaints procedure is set out in the University's Rules and Regulations for Students.

Schools should ensure that all students are made aware of how they may raise an individual or collective concern and how to make a formal complaint. Students also need to be advised where they may obtain confidential advice on academic and other issues.

As concerns raised at an early stage are more likely to be resolved quickly and effectively students are encouraged to raise any issue that concerns them at the earliest opportunity, initially informally with the appropriate person, who will in many cases be their supervisors. If a student is unable to discuss the issue with their supervisors, they should approach the school's nominated person in charge of postgraduate research programmes or the Head of School. Problems that cannot be resolved within the school should be referred to the Faculty PGR Director.

Collective issues may be raised via the school and faculty student representative systems.

10.4   Useful sources of information

There is a wide range of sources of help and advice that students may draw on. Detailed information is provided on the Current Student webpages. The Students' Union Just Ask team offers a range of welfare advice and support.

10.5   Monitoring of complaints and appeals

The Student Complaints Officer presents an annual report on appeals under these regulations to Senate and the Board of Trustees.

The Office of the Independent adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) is an independent scheme for the review of student complaints. The OIA will only consider cases when the University's internal procedures have been exhausted. The OIA will not intervene in matters which turn purely on academic judgement.

<div align="right">**ANNEX 1**</div>

Regulations for specific doctoral degrees

Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

The *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* ("the Regulations and Code") apply to this degree, except where separate provision is made below.

The relevant sections of the *[Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes](#)* will apply to the assessment of any taught components of these degrees.

Candidature for the degree of PhD shall be either by dissertation or by published work.

1. **Candidature by dissertation**

1.1 **Qualification for admission**

Candidates should refer to the general statement of admissions requirements contained in Section 4 of the Regulations and Code.

1.2 **Qualification for the award**

A candidate qualifies for the PhD by:

(a) pursuing research for a period as specified in 1.3 below;

(b) submitting a dissertation embodying the results of this research;

(c) passing an oral examination on the dissertation conducted by examiners appointed by the University; and

(d) satisfying any formal requirements set by the faculty or a sponsor for a curriculum of advanced study, or for satisfactory performance in any other prescribed work, during the period of PhD registration. Such requirements will be specified before admission.

1.3 **Period of study**

The normal minimum period of study is three years full-time or six years part-time.

The normal maximum period of study is four years full-time or seven years part-time.

Full-time PhD students funded by an official sponsor who were registered before 24 September 2018 may have an addition to their maximum period of study of up to twelve months if this was agreed as part of their registration. Any new full-time PhD students, who are funded by an official sponsor and who register through a doctoral training entity on an established PhD programme that was set up before 24 September 2018, may also have an addition to their maximum period of study of up to twelve months if the addition was agreed when the programme was initially formed. Doctoral training entities set up on or after 24 September 2018, including those that have been re-established following a re-bidding process, are not able to allow additions to the normal maximum period of study.

All other suspensions of study and extensions of period of study should take place as set out in Section 6.4 of the Regulations and Code.

1.4 Submission of dissertation

A candidate may submit their dissertation up to three months before the end of the minimum period of study. Any submission earlier than that requires prior approval by the Faculty PGR Director of the faculty in which the candidate is registered.

Early submission will not affect tuition fee liability.

The dissertation must be submitted for examination on or before the final submission date (see Section 9.2.2).

1.5 Length of dissertation

Dissertations should not normally exceed 80,000 words, excluding references, appendices and lists of contents. Faculty-specific guidelines on references are available. Unnecessary length of a dissertation may be to a candidate's disadvantage.

1.6 Transfer of registration

The PhD programme may include opportunities for candidates to transfer registration to an appropriate Masters level award, as permitted by faculty regulations.

1.7 Exit awards from PhDs with a taught component

Where a PhD programme includes an integrated taught component, a candidate may be eligible for a taught exit award if they choose to leave before completing the doctoral programme, fail to satisfy the examiners in the research component, or if a student's registration is changed to that of an alternative degree by a Registration Review Panel (see Annex 3). In such cases, a candidate may be recommended for the award of a Masters, a Postgraduate Diploma or a Postgraduate Certificate, provided they have satisfied the requirements on total credits and the minimum number of credits required at the highest level, in accordance with the University's Credit Framework.

Candidates must have:
  a) for the award of a taught Masters, 180 credit points with at least 150 credit points at level 7;
  b) for the award of a PG Diploma, 120 credit points with at least 90 credit points at level 7; and
  c) for the award of a PG Certificate, 60 credit points with at least 40 credit points at level 7.

2. <u>Candidature by published work</u>

2.1 Criteria for candidature by published work

A PhD by published work must be of an equivalent standard to a PhD by dissertation.[4] A candidate's published work must therefore:

a) relate in a coherent way to the field of knowledge and represent a significant and original contribution;
b) show evidence of the candidate's capacity to pursue independently original research based on a good understanding of the relevant techniques and concepts; and
c) make a contribution to research at a level and scope equivalent to the dissertation route.

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[4] It is also permissible for the Engineering Doctorate (EngD) and the Doctor of Medicine (MD) to be undertaken by candidature by published work.

The published work submitted may range over a number of different topics, but these must relate in a coherent way to a field of knowledge. The treatment of these topics should be substantial; greater weight will be attached to a few substantial publications than to a larger number of brief notes, and the rate at which the work has been done will be considered in the light of the circumstances under which the research was carried out. It is not normally possible to form an adequate judgement of the candidate's eligibility unless the amount of work submitted is considerable, having due regard to the nature of the discipline.

Candidature by published work is not the same as the integration of publications as chapters within the dissertation (see Annex 5).

2.2 Eligibility

Subject always to the criteria set out in 2.1, candidature for the degree of PhD by published work may be granted to:

a) a graduate of the University of Bristol of not less than six years standing;

b) a graduate of another university of not less than six years standing, who is a member of academic staff of the University of Bristol with a contract of employment and who has been employed by the University for at least three continuous years; or

c) a member of academic staff of the University of Bristol with a contract of employment who has equivalent experience to a first degree and who has been employed by the University for at least three continuous years.

2.3 Application

The final decision on whether or not to permit a candidate to register for a PhD by published work rests with the Faculty PGR Director of the relevant faculty, who must ensure that the candidate has published enough appropriate material to have a reasonable chance of being awarded a PhD. The Faculty PGR Director will inform the Head of School.

An application must include:
a) a synopsis of approximately 500 words outlining the extent, range, quality and coherence of the work to be submitted;
b) a list of the publications the candidate intends to submit; and
c) a *curriculum vitae*, including details of the candidate's employment at the University of Bristol where relevant.

A candidate should not assume that permission to register for a PhD by published work will automatically result in the award of a PhD, as they have to pass the final examination in the same way as any other candidate.

2.4 Registration

If approved, the candidate will be required to pay the relevant registration and submission fee. The candidate, once registered, will be assigned an advisor to support and guide them during the preparation of the work for submission. The advisor will be a senior member of academic staff at the University who is familiar with both the standard required and with the candidate's field of work.

It is the responsibility of the Head of School (or nominee) to ensure that suitable advisors are appointed, that they have appropriate knowledge and skills, and that they have the time to carry out their advisory duties.

2.5 Submission

Candidates must submit their published work within 12 months of the initial registration, unless an extension has been granted by the Faculty PGR Director.

Candidates may include publications beyond those in their application portfolio as long as all publications are at least in press at the point of submission. The submission must be in accordance with Section 9.2.3 of the Regulations and Code and should consist of:

a) the published work (which may include some papers in press);
b) a substantial commentary, not exceeding 10,000 words, that states the aims and nature of the research, that links the published work and its coherence, and that indicates the significance and the original contribution to the field made by the work in the opinion of the candidate;
c) a signed statement advising how far the work submitted is based on the candidate's own independent study, making it clear for each publication how far the work was conducted in collaboration with or with the assistance of others and the conditions and circumstances in which the work was carried out; and
d) a *curriculum vitae*, focusing on the candidate's research career and on the circumstances under which the research work leading to the publications submitted was carried out.

2.6 Examination

The criteria for the appointment of examiners must be in accordance with Section 9.3 of the Regulations and Code, where references to supervisor should be read as advisor.

The oral examination must adhere to Section 9.4 of the Regulations and Code.

Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Musical Composition (PhD in Musical Composition)

The *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* (referred to throughout this document as "the Regulations and Code") will apply to this degree, except where separate provision is made below.

1. Admission to the degree programme

A candidate wishing to pursue a PhD in Musical Composition shall normally be registered in the first instance for the degree of MPhil or MMus, and to complete successfully the relevant upgrade process before transferring their registration to the PhD programme. A candidate who enters as an MMus student may, subject to achieving a satisfactory standard after two years of full-time (four years part-time) study, upgrade to the degree of PhD. A candidate who enters as an MPhil student may, subject to achieving a satisfactory standard after one year of full-time (two years part-time) study, upgrade to the degree of MMus and thence, after a further year (two years part-time), upgrade to the degree of PhD.

2. Qualification for the award

The portfolio will comprise compositions for a variety of forces, of which at least one will be substantial in both medium and design. In general, all or most of the pieces will have been performed, and recordings should be included with the submitted scores. Electronic and mixed media submissions of equivalent merit and extent are equally permissible. The commentary will provide an intellectually rigorous account of the composer's creative landmarks and the nature of their contribution to the field of contemporary composition. It will elucidate issues of importance to the candidate (e.g. constructional, cross-cultural, technological, sociological or other) and demonstrate awareness of the broader context within which the work is situated.

The qualification for the degree shall be:

a) submission of a portfolio of compositions (normally between five and seven) totalling c. 75 – 120 minutes of music;
b) submission of an analytical/contextual commentary on the portfolio (normally totalling c. 15,000 words excluding references, appendices and lists of contents). The commentary will be appropriately referenced and will include a bibliography (including a list of repertoire studied, i.e. scores and other media); and
c) approval of these submissions by examiners appointed by the University.

3. Submission

The submission must normally be made after three years and within four years (seven years part-time) of the date of initial registration for a research degree in Musical Composition. See Section 9.2.2 on the timing of submissions.

Regulations for the Degree of Engineering Doctorate (EngD)

The *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* ("the Regulations and Code") will apply to this degree, except where separate provision is made below.

The relevant sections of the *[Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes](#)* will apply to the assessment of the taught component of these degrees.

1. **Approved programmes of study**

   The degree of EngD may be awarded only in subjects approved by Senate. The subjects currently available are:
   - Composites Manufacturing;
   - Non-Destructive Evaluation; and
   - Systems.

   Each of these has a specified programme of study comprising a taught and research component.

2. **Period of study**

   The normal minimum period of study is three years full-time or six years part-time.
   The normal maximum period of study is four years full-time or seven years part-time.

   Full-time EngD students who were registered before 24 September 2018 have a maximum period of study of five years. Any new full-time EngD students who register through a doctoral training entity on an established EngD programme that was set up before 24 September 2018 will also have a maximum period of study of five years. Doctoral training entities set up on or after 24 September 2018, including those that have been re-established following a re-bidding process, have a four-year normal maximum period of study for full-time EngD students.

3. **Qualification for the award**

   A candidate will qualify for the EngD by:
   a) passing the specified taught component;
   b) carrying out research at doctoral level and submitting a dissertation by the end of the specified period of study; and
   c) passing the final oral examination for the research component (as set out in Section 9 of the Regulations and Code).

4. **Exit awards**

   If a candidate wishes, or is required, to withdraw before completing the research component of an EngD they may qualify for one of the taught exit awards specified in the relevant programme of study.

5. **Content and length of dissertation**

   (a) In addition to the standard criteria for assessment of a research degree as specified in Annex 7, a candidate for an EngD must also demonstrate a clear appreciation of the industrial context and significance of their research.

   (b) A candidate may not submit as their dissertation work which has already been submitted for an academic award of any degree awarding body. However, a candidate may incorporate

part of such work provided this is clearly stated and the relevant work is clearly referenced in the dissertation.

(c) Dissertations should not exceed 80,000 words, excluding references, appendices and lists of contents.

6. **Candidature by Published Work**

It is also permissible for the EngD to be undertaken through candidature by published work. The requirements and guidance on candidature by published work are held in the Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Annex 1 above, where references to PhD should be read as EngD.

Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Medicine (MD)

The *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* ("the Regulations and Code") will apply to this degree, except where separate provision is made below.

The degree of Doctor of Medicine shall be either by dissertation or by published work.

1. Candidature by Dissertation

1.1 Qualification for admission

Candidature for the degree of Doctor of Medicine by dissertation shall be open to:
a) Bachelors of Medicine and Surgery from UK Universities of not less than two years standing.
b) Holders of equivalent degrees from overseas universities of not less than two years standing.

Individuals who comply with either a) or b) above must also be able to satisfy at least one of the following criteria:
      i) Previous research experience;
      ii) Evidence of publication in a related field; or
      iii) Evidence of contributing to successful research funding proposal(s).

1.2 Qualification for the award

The qualification for the degree by dissertation shall be:
a) a period of original research on a project that satisfies the appropriate faculty's (Health Sciences *or* Life Sciences) criteria and is no less than two years (full time study) in length;
b) a dissertation contributing to the advancement of medical knowledge, making a significant original contribution in the field of learning within which the subject falls, showing evidence of originality and independent critical powers, with satisfactory literary form; and
c) approval of the dissertation by examiners appointed by the University

1.3 Work previously submitted

A candidate may not submit as their dissertation work which has already been submitted for an academic award. However, a candidate may incorporate part of such work, provided this is stated in the candidate's application and the work is clearly indicated in the dissertation.

1.4 Length of Dissertation

Unnecessary length in a dissertation may be to the candidate's disadvantage. The dissertation should not exceed 60,000 words, excluding references, appendices and lists of contents.

1.5 Submission

Except as permitted under Section 6 of the Regulations and Code, the dissertation shall be submitted within five years (comprising at least two years full time research) of the date of commencement of the project, for full-time candidates. For part-time candidates, the dissertation shall be submitted within seven years of the date of commencement of the project with a minimum period of study of four years. Candidates should refer to Section 9 of the Regulations and Code for requirements and guidance about submission of the dissertation.

2. Candidature by Published Work

The requirements and guidance on candidature by published work are held in the Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Annex 1 above, where references to PhD should be read as MD.

Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Dental Surgery (DDS)

The *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* ("the Regulations and Code") will apply to this degree, except where separate provision is made below.

The relevant sections of the *[Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes](...)* will apply to the assessment of the taught component of these degrees.

1. Introduction
The degree of DDS is currently available in the area of Orthodontics.

2. Qualification for admission
Bachelors of Dental Surgery who have passed the final examination for such degrees at least two years previously may be candidates for the degree of DDS by Advanced Study and Research.

3. Qualification for the award
3 1   The qualification for the degree shall be:
  (a) pursuance of a curriculum of study;
  (b) submission of a dissertation based on research carried out by the candidate;
  (c) satisfactory performance in all prescribed work and assessments, approved by examiners appointed by the University; and
  (d) satisfactory completion of clinical assessments and/or placements.

3.2 The dissertation must represent a contribution to knowledge, showing evidence of originality and independent critical powers; a candidate must also satisfy the examiners through the dissertation, or in the examination, that they are well acquainted with the general field of knowledge to which the subject relates. Dissertations must in all cases contain original work worthy of publication and their literary form must be satisfactory. The examiners, one external and one internal, shall normally require the candidate to present themselves at the University for an oral examination of the dissertation.

3.3 In addition to the submission of the dissertation, candidates are also required to pass a clinically focussed examination in Dental Surgery. Where a candidate possesses a higher clinical dental qualification or is listed in the General Dental Council's Specialist Register, the examiners may exempt them from a clinical examination in Dental Surgery.

4. Curriculum Content and Structure
4.1 The curriculum will consist of not less than 3 years of full-time study or pro rata part-time.

4.2 Candidates must take not less than 180 credit points of taught modules at levels M and D, followed by not less than 360 credit points of study at level D comprising research and clinical practice.

5. Outcomes of the oral examination of the dissertation
  See Section 9.5 of the Regulations and Code.

6. Exit awards and withdrawal from the programme
6.1 A candidate who fails to satisfy the examiners in the research component, who is permitted to transfer to a lower-level award or who would like to leave before completing the DDS may be recommended for the award of a taught Masters or a PG Diploma in Orthodontics in accordance with the University Credit Framework.

6.2 In line with the University's regulations for taught programmes, if a student fails to achieve the required standard in summative written or clinical examinations there will normally only be one

opportunity for reassessment. Failure to achieve the required standard after this point will normally result in withdrawal from the programme.

6.3 Failure to achieve satisfactory performance in the assessment of clinical skills will normally result in withdrawal from the programme.

Regulations for the Degree of Doctor of Educational Psychology (DEdPsy)

The *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* ("the Regulations and Code") will apply to this degree, except where separate provision is made below.

The relevant sections of the *[Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes](#)*, will apply to the assessment of the taught component of these degrees.

1.   Qualification for admission
Candidature for the degree of Doctor of Educational Psychology shall be subject to Section 4.1 of the Regulations and Code and the relevant [admissions statement](#). This includes the requirement to undergo a DBS disclosure.

2.   Qualification for the award
2.1 The qualification for the degree shall be:
- a) pursuance of a curriculum of advanced study;
- b) satisfactory completion of fieldwork placements;
- c) submission of a dissertation, representing a contribution to knowledge; and
- d) approval of such dissertation by examiners appointed by the University.

3.   Period of study
The normal minimum period of study is three years full-time or six years part-time.
The normal maximum period of study is four years full-time or seven years part-time.

For regulations concerning suspension of study or extension of the period of study, see Section 6 of the Regulations & Code.

4.   Taught Stage
4.1 Students shall take taught units as prescribed in the [programme structure](#).

4.2 Units will be marked on a 5 point scale, A – E, where the pass mark is C.

4.3 Students must achieve the pass mark for the unit and meet any additional criteria, if applicable, to be awarded the associated credit. Additional criteria will be described in the unit description and School or Programme handbooks.

4.4 A student who is not awarded the credit for a unit may be permitted a second attempt to achieve a satisfactory standard to progress. Resubmission of essays and coursework should normally be within 8-12 weeks of confirmation of the grade by the external examiner.

4.5 If any student fails to achieve the unit pass mark following a re-sit of the unit, they will be required to withdraw from the programme with an exit award (if appropriate) unless there are validated extenuating circumstances. Refer to the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes* for full details of extenuating circumstances processes.

4.6 For any unit which is passed by re-assessment, the recorded unit mark will be capped at the minimum pass mark, even if the student achieves a higher mark in the re-assessment.

4.7 During the taught stage, students are subject to the [Examination Regulations](#) covering plagiarism and cheating.

5. Placement

5.1 Students **must** successfully complete the required fieldwork placements. In year 1 there are three placements, totalling 94 days. In Year 2 and 3 students will undertake their required placement learning at their workplace for 3 days a week. Full details of the placement requirements can be found in the Programme Handbook.

5.2 The placements will be assessed via the following:

    5.2.1 Professional Practice Portfolio;

    5.2.2 Self-assessment profiles;

    5.2.3 Summary reports provided by fieldwork supervisors; and

    5.2.4 Completion of a 4,000 word assignment or equivalent for each practice–based unit.

6. Progression to Dissertation

6.1 In order to be permitted to progress to the dissertation, students must meet the following criteria:

    a) Pass all taught units and fieldwork placements as prescribed in the programme of study.

    b) Successfully complete any pre-requisites designated by the programme as preparation for dissertation.

    c) Submit a research proposal, which must be approved by the School. Consideration should be given to the feasibility of the study and ability to complete the dissertation within the time limit.

    d) Obtain any ethical approval as required for the dissertation.

6.2 Once a student has progressed to the dissertation stage, they will be subject to progress monitoring arrangements as described in Section 6 of the Regulations and Code

7. Submission of dissertation

7.1 A candidate may not submit as their dissertation work which has already been submitted for an academic award of any degree awarding body. However, a candidate may incorporate part of such work, provided this is stated in the candidate's application and the work is clearly indicated in the dissertation.

7.2 Dissertations should not exceed 45,000 words, excluding references, appendices and lists of contents. Unnecessary length in a dissertation may be to the candidate's disadvantage.

8. Oral Examination of the dissertation

    Refer to Section 9.4 of the Regulations and Code.

9. Outcomes of the oral examination of the dissertation

    See Section 9.5 of the Regulations and Code for the possible outcomes of this examination.

10. Other professional requirements

    Successful trainees must also be deemed to have achieved competence in the areas of personal, academic and professional competence as specified in the BPS core curriculum and HPC Standards of Proficiency.

11. Exit awards

    A candidate who fails to satisfy the examiners in the research component of this degree (ie, fails the oral examination), or who is permitted to transfer programme, or who would like to leave before completing the DEdPsy may be recommended for the award of a taught Masters, a PG Diploma or a PG Certificate in Research and Professional Studies in Educational

Psychology, subject to the following conditions and in accordance with the University Credit Framework:

a) in the case of the Masters, candidates must obtain at least 180 credit points;
b) in the case of the PG Diploma, candidates must obtain at least 120 credit points; and
c) in the case of the PG Certificate, candidates must obtain at least 60 credit points.

Regulations for the   Degree of Doctor of Social Science (DSocSci)
                         Degree of Doctor of Education (EdD)

The *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* ("the Regulations and Code") will apply to these degrees, except where separate provision is made below.

The relevant sections of the *[Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes](#)* will apply to the assessment of the taught component of these degrees.

1.   Qualification for admission

1.1   Candidature for the degree shall be subject to Section 4.1 of the Regulations and Code and the relevant [admissions statement](#).

1.2   A candidate who has obtained a Master of Science degree, or such other degree or award as may be deemed equivalent, may apply for recognition of Accredited Prior Learning and may be granted remission of part of the taught component up to a maximum of 90 credit points (DSocSci) or 100 credit points (EdD) of the 540 credit points required for award of the degree. Such an exemption will **only** be granted **if the candidate successfully completes the doctoral programme,** i.e. submits a dissertation which is approved by the examiners appointed by the University.

2.   Qualification for the degree

2.1   The qualification for the degree shall be:
   a)   pursuance of a curriculum of advanced study;
   b)   satisfactory performance in prescribed work;
   c)   submission of a dissertation, representing a contribution to knowledge; and
   d)   approval of such dissertation by examiners appointed by the University

3.   Period of study

The normal minimum period of study is three years full-time or six years part-time.
The normal maximum period of study is four years full-time or seven years part-time.

For regulations concerning suspension of study or extension of the period of study, see Section 6 of the Regulations & Code.

4. Taught Stage

4.1   Students shall take taught units as prescribed in the [programme structure](#).

4.2   Units will be marked on a 5 point scale, A – E, where the pass mark is C, *or* a 100 point scale where the pass mark is 50.

4.3   Students must achieve the pass mark for the unit and meet any additional criteria, if applicable, to be awarded the associated credit. Additional criteria will be described in the unit description and School or Programme handbooks.

4.4   A student who is not awarded the credit for a unit may be permitted a second attempt to achieve a satisfactory standard to progress. Resubmission of essays and coursework should normally be within 8-12 weeks of confirmation of the grade by the external examiner.

4.5   If any student fails to achieve the unit pass mark following a re-sit of the unit, they will be required to withdraw from the programme with an exit award (if appropriate) unless there are validated extenuating circumstances. Refer the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Taught Programmes* for full details of extenuating circumstances processes.

4.6 For any unit which is passed by re-assessment, the recorded unit mark will be capped at the minimum pass mark, even if the student achieves a higher mark in the re-assessment.

4.7 Students are subject to the University [Examination Regulations](#) on plagiarism and cheating.

4.8 The taught stage shall normally be completed within 2 years for full time students and 4 years for part-time students, subject to unit availability. Students who do not meet this time frame will be encouraged to exit with a lower award.

5. Progression to Dissertation

5.1 In order to be permitted to progress to the dissertation, students must meet the following criteria:
   a) Pass all taught units as prescribed in the programme of study.
   b) Gain at least 100 credit points in the taught component by achieving the pass mark at the first attempt.
   c) Successfully complete any pre-requisites designated by the School as preparation for dissertation.
   d) Submit a research proposal, which must be approved by the School. Consideration should be given to the feasibility of the study and ability to complete the dissertation within the time limit.
   e) Obtain any ethical approval as required for the dissertation.

5.2 Once a student has progressed to the dissertation stage, they will be subject to progress monitoring arrangements as described in Section 6 of the Regulations and Code.

6. Submission of the dissertation

6.1 The dissertation shall normally be submitted not earlier than one year and not later than four years after completion of the course work. The only permitted exceptions to this are covered by the rules on suspension of study or extension of the period of study in Section 6 of the Regulations and Code.

6.2 Submissions must comply with Section 9 of the Regulations and Code. Candidates should also be aware of the procedures for cases of plagiarism detected in a dissertation submitted for a research degree in Annex 8.

6.3 A candidate may not submit as their dissertation work which has already been submitted for an academic award of any degree awarding body. However, a candidate may incorporate part of such work, provided this is stated in the candidate's application and the work is clearly indicated in the dissertation.

6.4 Dissertations should not exceed 45,000 words, excluding references, appendices and lists of contents. Unnecessary length in a dissertation may be to the candidate's disadvantage.

7. Oral Examination of the dissertation

See Section 9.4 of the Regulations and Code for details of this examination, and Section 9.5 for the possible outcomes of this examination.

8. Exit awards

8.1 Candidates on either the DSocSci or the EdD who fail to satisfy the examiners or who wish to leave before completing their award, may be recommended for the award of a taught Masters, PG Diploma or a PG Certificate subject to the following conditions and in accordance with the University Credit Framework:

a) in the case of the Masters, candidates must obtain at least 180 credit points;

b) in the case of the PG Diploma, candidates must obtain at least 120 credit points; and

c) in the case of the PG Certificate, candidates must obtain at least 60 credit points.

The exit awards are:

- from the DSoc Sci, a Masters/PG Diploma/PG Cert in Social Sciences (Policy Studies);

- from the EdD, a Masters/PG Diploma/PG Cert in Research & Professional Studies.

In accordance with Section 1.2 of these Regulations for the DSocSci and EdD, an exemption for Accredited Prior Learning *is not permitted for exit awards*. Students must reach the minimum amount of credit points to be considered for the exit award by taking and passing modules as part of their current programme of study.

Regulations for Masters degrees by research

The *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* ("the Regulations and Code") will apply to the following research degrees: Master of Music, Master of Philosophy and Master of Science by Research, except where separate provision is made below.

1.   Qualification for the degree: general statement

A candidate qualifies for the degree by:

    a) pursuing research for a period as specified in Section 4.3 of the Regulations and Code;

    b) submitting a dissertation embodying the results of this research;

    c) an oral examination and approval of the dissertation by examiners appointed by the University; and

    d) satisfying any formal requirements set by the faculty or a sponsor for a curriculum of advanced study, or for satisfactory performance in prescribed work, during the period of Masters degree by research registration. Such contractual requirements will be clearly stated before admission.

The criteria for award of a Masters degree by research are in Annex 7 and the assessment process is in Section 9 of the Regulations and Code.

There are specific regulations for the MPhil in Musical Composition and the Master of Music (MMus) in Section 5 of this annex below.

2.   Submission of dissertation

Submission before the end of the minimum period is only possible with the approval of the Faculty PGR Director. Early submission will not affect tuition fee liability.

The dissertation must be submitted for examination on or before the final submission date (see Section 9.2.2).

3.   Length of dissertation

Dissertations should not exceed 30,000 words, excluding references, appendices and list of contents. Unnecessary length in a dissertation may be to the candidate's disadvantage.

Dissertations for the MPhil degree in the Faculty of Arts should not exceed 25,000 words, excluding references, appendices and lists of contents. The MPhil in Musical Composition and the Master of Music have different requirements as set out in Section 5 of this annex below.

4.   Transfer of registration

The Masters degree by research programme may include opportunities for candidates to transfer registration to a doctoral award, subject to satisfactory progress and the overall maximum study period for the doctorate.

5.   Specific regulations for MPhil in Musical Composition and Master of Music (MMus)

Candidates for the degrees of MPhil in Musical Composition and MMus will submit a portfolio of compositions for a variety of forces. A proportion of the portfolio will have been performed, and recordings should be included with the submitted scores. Electronic and mixed media submissions of equivalent merit and extent are equally permissible. The commentary will provide an intellectually rigorous account of the composer's creative landmarks and the nature of their contribution to the field of contemporary composition. It will elucidate issues of importance to the

candidate (e.g. constructional, cross-cultural, technological, sociological or other) and demonstrate awareness of the broader context within which the work is situated.

5.1   The degree of MPhil in Musical Composition requires:

a) A portfolio of compositions (normally two or three) totalling c. 25 – 35 minutes of music.

b) An analytical/contextual commentary on the portfolio (normally totalling 4,000 - 5,000 words excluding references, appendices and lists of contents). The commentary will be appropriately referenced and will include a bibliography (including a list of repertoire studied, i.e. scores and other media).

c) Approval of these submissions by examiners appointed by the University.

5.2   The degree of MMus requires:

a) A portfolio of compositions (normally four or five) totalling c. 50 – 70 minutes of music.

b) An analytical/contextual commentary on the portfolio (normally totalling 8,000 - 10,000 words excluding references, appendices and lists of contents). The commentary will be appropriately referenced and will include a bibliography (including a list of repertoire studied, i.e. scores and other media).

c) Approval of these submissions by examiners appointed by the University.

<div align="right">**ANNEX 3**</div>

Procedure for addressing unsatisfactory academic progress

Introduction

This formal procedure must be followed when a research student's academic progress is still below the standard required after they have been given enhanced academic support (see Section 6.3 of the Regulations and Code).

Research students whose academic performance is below the standard required should be advised at every stage of the options available to them, including voluntary withdrawal and requesting to change their registration to another degree.

Written records shall be kept of all informal and formal meetings at which a student's academic progress is considered and shall be copied to all participants and filed securely in the school. Students will be invited to sign off action plans so as to indicate that they have seen and understood the plans. Where feasible, students should be informed of progress decisions in person, otherwise via their University email address. Failure by the student to agree records, to acknowledge progress decisions or to sign off an action plan will not delay the operation of the procedure outlined here.

Under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, students may request access to any progress information held by the University during their studies e.g. progress reports and annual progress review reports.

Unless the context indicates otherwise, references within this procedure to an office holder shall refer to that office holder or to a nominee. References to the supervisor shall be taken to mean the student's main supervisor or supervisory team, as appropriate. Where the student's main supervisor is the School PGR Director or Faculty PGR Director, a nominee will be appointed.

1.   Formal progress meeting

If the research student's progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory after the period of enhanced academic support (see Section 6.3 of the Regulations and Code), the supervisor will notify the student and the Faculty PGR Director in writing, copied to the School PGR Director, to initiate this procedure. Figure A3.1 summarises the procedure.

Upon notification, the Faculty PGR Director will set up a formal progress meeting as soon as possible. The purpose of this meeting, chaired by the Faculty PGR Director and attended by the student, the supervisor and the School PGR Director, is to consider the causes of the continuing unsatisfactory progress and any extenuating circumstances. At this meeting, both the student and the supervisor may raise, in writing or in person, any issues which they consider to be impeding the student's satisfactory progress. The student may bring a friend or supporter (this person may be from Just Ask) with them to the meeting, although that person will not normally take part in the discussion. Formal notes will be taken and copied to all parties. The Faculty PGR Director will consider whether any action can be taken to resolve any issues raised. If so, the Faculty PGR Director may direct that enhanced academic support is extended for a single further period, normally not exceeding two months (or four months for a part-time student), with appropriate measures in place to address the issues, for example in relation to supervision or additional support for the student. The purpose of this extended period is to allow the student additional time to complete Plan 1 (see Section 6.3 of the Regulations and Code).

If the Faculty PGR Director concludes that there are no external causes for the unsatisfactory progress, the Faculty PGR Director will direct that the student should move immediately to the continued concern stage under the next part of this procedure.

In either case, the Faculty PGR Director must notify the student and the school of the outcome of the formal progress meeting in writing within one week of the meeting.

If the period of enhanced academic support has been extended and the supervisor and the School PGR Director consider that progress is satisfactory by the end of the extended period, they will advise the Faculty PGR Director accordingly. The Faculty PGR Director will then write to the student and the school to confirm this, and this procedure will immediately come to an end.

If the period of enhanced academic support has been extended and the supervisor and the School PGR Director consider that progress is still not satisfactory by the end of the extended period, they will advise the Faculty PGR Director accordingly. The Faculty PGR Director will then direct that the student should move immediately to continued concern stage and will notify the student and the school in writing of this decision.

When notifying the student that continued concern stage has been initiated, the Faculty PGR Director should also inform the student of the potential consequences if a Registration Review Panel recommends termination or a change of registration.

2.   Continued concern stage

At this stage, the research student has failed to demonstrate satisfactory progress for several months and is at risk of being required to transfer to a different programme of study or, in the worst case, to withdraw.

If the Faculty PGR Director has directed that the continued concern stage should be initiated, the supervisor, in consultation with the School PGR Director, must draw up an action plan ("Plan 2"), normally within two weeks of the student being notified they are in the continued concern stage. Plan 2 must specify clearly what needs to be done, who is responsible for each action and the deadline for completion of the work (not exceeding three months or six months for a part-time student). Plan 2 should also include information about relevant support and training.

The School PGR Director will write to the student with a copy of Plan 2, setting out exactly what the student has to do by the specified deadline to recover from being in the continued concern stage. The letter and the plan will be copied to the Faculty PGR Director. The School PGR Director will monitor progress against Plan 2 and will report to the Faculty PGR Director at the end of the continued concern stage period. On receipt of the School PGR Director's report, the Faculty PGR Director will decide either to remove or to extend the continued concern designation, or to refer the student to a Registration Review Panel.

Where the actions in Plan 2 are satisfactorily completed within the agreed timescale and the School PGR Director reports to the Faculty PGR Director that they are satisfied with the progress of the student, the Faculty PGR Director will inform the student in writing, copied to the supervisor, that the student is no longer in the continued concern stage and this procedure will immediately come to an end.

Where the student has not completed Plan 2, but where the School PGR Director reports that there are extenuating circumstances, the Faculty PGR Director may choose to extend the period during which the student is deemed to be in the continued concern stage, once only, by no more than two months (or four months for a part-time student). In this case, a further meeting of the student, the supervisor and the School PGR Director may then take place to agree the outstanding actions with appropriate timescales and to update Plan 2 if necessary. The Faculty PGR Director will write to

the student, copied to the supervisor and the school, with the updated plan. The School PGR Director will continue to monitor progress against the updated plan and will report again to the Faculty PGR Director at the end of the extended period.

Where the actions are not satisfactorily completed within the agreed timescale, the School PGR Director reports continuing serious concerns about the student's progress and there are no extenuating circumstances, the Faculty PGR Director will inform the student in writing, copied to the supervisor and the school, that the case is being referred to a Registration Review Panel.

The Faculty PGR Director will refer the case to a Registration Review Panel by notifying the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR) in writing.

3.   Registration Review Panel

3.1.   Composition of the Registration Review Panel

The Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR) will appoint a Registration Review Panel consisting of the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR) as Chair and two senior academic members of staff (normally including at least one from the same school as the student) who must have had no previous involvement in the matter and who are independent of the student and the supervisor. The Faculty Education Manager is responsible for the administration of the Registration Review Panel, and the Faculty Education Manager (or a nominee) will normally attend the panel.

The University Secretary's Office will provide a clerk to the Registration Review Panel, to make a formal record of the proceedings and to provide advice on procedural matters. Meetings of a Registration Review Panel may be recorded at the discretion of the Chair.

3.2.   Initial steps

The school should provide the following documentation for the Panel:

- A covering paper which provides basic information on the case (name of school, student's name, supervisors' names, start date and expected end date, project title and details of any suspensions of study, etc.).

- All documentation relating to the application and appointment of the student, including any contract or agreement between the University and any funding body or sponsor.

- All minutes of meetings and letters associated with the student's progress, including annual progress report forms.

- A summary from the school of the main points of the case, to include main concerns, events and actions taken in the light of meetings held and evidence of any mitigating circumstances.

This documentation should be sent to the student and to the members of the Registration Review Panel at least 14 days before the hearing. The student should be invited to respond in writing and to submit any supporting documentation at least seven days before the hearing, for circulation to the members of the Registration Review Panel and the school. The main supervisor should be invited to provide a brief statement in writing, if desired.

3.3.   Remit of the Registration Review Panel

The Registration Review Panel will hold a hearing at which both the student and representatives from the school, normally including the main supervisor, are entitled to be present. The student may be accompanied at the hearing by an adviser, friend or representative.

The Registration Review Panel will consider:

- whether or not the student is capable of attaining the required academic standard within the timescale prescribed by regulation for the award;
- the amount of work already completed to a satisfactory standard (especially where the student's registration is to be changed); and
- any extenuating circumstances.

3.4.   Procedure of the Registration Review Panel

The order of the hearing will be at the discretion of the Registration Review Panel, but will normally be conducted as follows:

    a.   the representatives from the school will present their submissions;
    b.   the student will present their response;
    c.   the Panel may ask questions of the school and the student;
    d.   the parties may ask questions of each other; and
    e.   each party will be offered the opportunity in turn to sum up or make closing remarks, with the student being given the final word.

3.5.   Decision of the Registration Review Panel

The decision of the Panel will be that of the majority of its members.

The Registration Review Panel may recommend any of the following courses of action:

- that the student's registration be terminated;

- that the student's registration be changed to that for an alternative degree;

- that the student's registration remain unchanged, but that the student remains in the continued concern stage for a further period; or

- that the student's registration remain unchanged and the student no longer remains in the continued concern stage.

The Panel may also make other recommendations on any matter it considers relevant.

The Registration Review Panel will report its recommendations within two weeks of the hearing to the Dean and the Faculty PGR Director. The Dean will make the decision on the case on the basis of the Panel's recommendations within a week of receiving the recommendations and will inform the student, the supervisor, and the school, attaching a copy of the Panel's report. A copy of the decision will be kept in the student's file.

Appeals against a decision to terminate or change the registration of a postgraduate research student may be made under the [Examination Regulations](#).

4.   Termination of the academic progress procedure

If a decision has been taken at any stage to bring the procedure to an end and there are subsequent concerns about the research student's academic progress and performance, the enhanced academic support process (in Section 6.3 of the Regulations and Code) should be initiated rather than starting with any of the stages of this procedure, unless the Faculty PGR Director decides otherwise.

Fig A3.1
Flow chart of the procedure for addressing unsatisfactory progress

Unless the context indicates otherwise, references to an office holder shall refer to that office holder or to a person nominated to act on their behalf. References to the supervisor shall mean the student's main supervisor or supervisory team, as appropriate. If the student's main supervisor is also the School PGR Director or the Faculty PGR Director, somebody else will be appointed to take on the role of School PGR Director or Faculty PGR Director.

The numbering of steps in this flowchart does not necessarily correspond to the numbering of sections in the text in the regulations.

Stage 1 - Formal Progress Review Meeting

1.1 **Faculty PGR Director** convenes a formal meeting (student, supervisor, School PGR Director) to review causes of the continuing unsatisfactory progress and any extenuating circumstances. Formal notes copied to all parties.

1.2 **Faculty PGR Director decision, A or B**

A. Extra time granted to complete Plan 1 (*once only, normally no more than 2 months full-time/4 months part-time permitted).*

Faculty PGR Director notifies student & school of decision in writing within 1 week

2.3 Supervisor monitors progress against Plan 1 and reviews position at end of extra agreed time.

Progress OK → Supervisor advises Faculty PGR Director, who writes to student & school to confirm back on track. → **END**

Progress not OK → Supervisor advises Faculty PGR Director, who notifies the student & school in writing that progress is still unsatisfactory and that the student will now move to being in continued concern (Stage 2). → **Go to Stage 2**

B. Move to continued concern (Stage 2).

Faculty PGR Director notifies student & school of decision in writing within 1 week of the meeting. → **Proceed immediately to Stage 2**

Stage 2– Continued concern

2.1 Supervisor (in consultation with the School PGR Director) produces action plan 2 to address the continued concern, normally within two weeks of the letter from the Faculty PGR Director. Plan 2 must contain very specific objectives and a clear timescale of no more than 3 months full-time or 6 months part-time.

2.2 The School PGR Director writes to the student with a copy of plan 2, setting out what the student has to do to recover from being in the continued concern stage. Letter and plan 2 copied to Faculty PGR Director.

2.3 The School PGR Director monitors progress against plan 2 *(or updated plan 2 if in extended time)* and reports to the Faculty PGR Director at the end of the specified period.

2.4 Faculty PGR Director decides on outcome A, B (first time only) or C and notifies student & school in writing.

A. Student back on track → **END**

B. Extra time to complete Plan 2, updated if necessary (*once only, no more than 2 months full-time/4 months part-time*) → **Go back to 2.3 above**

C. Refer to Registration Review Panel → **Proceed immediately to Stage 3**

Stage 3 – Registration Review Panel

3.1 Faculty PGR Director refers the case to the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR), who sets up a Registration Review Panel (RRP) as specified in the Code of Practice.

3.2 The RRP recommends to the Dean of the Faculty, within 2 weeks of the hearing, one of 4 outcomes: terminate registration, change registration, extend the continued concern stage period, or no change to registration and student no longer in the continued concern stage.

3.3 The Dean makes the final decision and writes to the student, supervisor and school with a copy of the RRP report, within 1 week of receiving the Panel's recommendation.

Notes

1. It is the responsibility of students to inform their sponsor that this procedure has been initiated and to update the sponsor on progress thereafter.

2. Where academic reports to sponsors are requested, supervisors must provide honest assessments of progress.

Format of the dissertation for research degrees

The format of the dissertation – including for research degrees by published work – are set out below and covers both the examination and final Library versions.

Supervisors should advise their research students on the norms and practices of their discipline in terms of the dissertation. Guidance on the integration of publications as chapters within the dissertation, which should only be used following a discussion between supervisors and the student, is provided in Annex 5.

The examination copy must be submitted as a fully formatted pdf. The final Library copy should be electronically deposited in pdf format or other format acceptable to the University and appropriate to the medium as agreed with supervisors.

See Annex 17 for the inclusion of a Covid-19 statement in the dissertation.

Format of dissertations for research degrees

Preliminary pages

The five preliminary pages (with the addition of a cover sheet if there is a partial deferment version – see below) must be the Title Page, Abstract, Dedication and Acknowledgements, Author's Declaration and Table of Contents. The preliminary pages should be single-sided and the main body of the dissertation should be double-sided.

Title page

At the top of the title page, within the margins, the dissertation should give the title and, if necessary, sub-title and volume number. If the dissertation is in a language other than English, the title must be given in that language and in English. The full name of the author should be in the centre of the page. At the bottom centre should be the words "A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements for award of the degree of … in the Faculty of ..." with the name of the school and month and year of submission. The word count of the dissertation (which excludes references, appendices and lists of contents) should be entered at the bottom right-hand side of the page.

Abstract

Each copy must include an abstract or summary of the dissertation in not more than 300 words, which should be single-spaced in a font size in the range 10 to 12. If the dissertation is in a language other than English, an abstract in that language and an abstract in English must be included.

Author's declaration

I declare that the work in this dissertation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the University's *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* and that it has not been submitted for any other academic award. Except where indicated by specific reference in the text, the work is the candidate's own work. Work done in collaboration with, or with the assistance of, others, is indicated as such. Any views expressed in the dissertation are those of the author.

SIGNED: .... DATE:........................

Students must print their name on the examination copy and on the final Library copy.

Partial deferment

Where a partial deferment for the public release of the final Library copy has been granted (see Section 9.2.5) both the redacted and full versions of the final version of the dissertation must be submitted. The redacted version file should adopt the following naming approach: 'Redacted_Final_Copy_[year_month_day]_[candidate surname_candidate initials]_[Degree type].'

A cover sheet must be integrated as the first page of the redacted version with a statement on the redactions agreed by the candidate, supervisors and any industrial sponsors. The following is a suggested wording for the statement, which should be adapted for individual circumstances.

> This is a redacted version of the full dissertation, as agreed by the candidate, the supervisors and [name], the industrial sponsor of this [degree type] studentship in the Faculty of [name]. The redactions cover key information that was deemed too sensitive to be published. The redactions have been kept to the minimum level necessary, so that the dissertation still shows the research excellence of the candidate.

The version for examination will contain the full text, even if a partial deferment has been granted.

Table of contents, list of tables and illustrative material

The table of contents must list, with page numbers, all chapters, sections and subsections, the list of references, bibliography, list of abbreviations and appendices. The list of tables and illustrations should follow the table of contents, listing with page numbers the tables, photographs, diagrams, etc., in the order in which they appear in the text.

Page numbering

The pages should be numbered consecutively at the bottom centre of the page.

Text

Text should be in double or 1.5 line spacing, and font size should be chosen to ensure clarity and legibility for the main text and for any quotations and footnotes.

Digital recording media and research data

Appended digital recording media should be in a standard format and there should be a declaration in the dissertation of the programs used and the size of the files.

For the final copy of the dissertation, digital media such as Excel files should be combined into a single pdf file with the dissertation text. Students should discuss any accompanying research data that may be submitted with the dissertation with their supervisors. Guidance is also available from Library Services.

Guidance on the integration of publications as chapters within the dissertation

Research students are strongly encouraged to publish their work, including prior to submission and examination. In some disciplines, it is accepted practice to include publications as chapters within the dissertation, while maintaining the dissertation as a coherent, single document. Students should discuss with their supervisors whether the inclusion of publications as chapters would be appropriate.

This guidance relates to the inclusion of complete publications as individual chapters (i.e. one publication per chapter) within a dissertation. These publications could be – for example – journal articles, conference proceedings or official reports, and may be already published, accepted for publication, submitted for publication, or in a format suitable for publication. A substantial amount of the researched materials in the publications must derive from original research undertaken by the student during their period of study. The integration of publications as chapters is not the same as candidature by published work, which relies on publications completed prior to registration – see Annex 1.

The student may be the sole or co-author of the publications. If any of the publications have been co-authored, there must be clarity on the contribution of the student, which must be substantial. The student's contribution to any co-authored publication must be clearly stated.

Faculties and schools may have discipline-specific advice in place to complement this guidance.

Format of the dissertation
All dissertations will conform to the format required in Annex 4. Where there are publications included as chapters (referred to as 'publication chapters' below), the following points also apply:

The dissertation must be thematically coherent and structured so that it can be read as an integrated document, including a separate introduction, a full literature review, an extended discussion that provides clarity on how the chapters are integrated as a complete text, and a separate conclusion. Throughout the dissertation, there must be consistent formatting with uninterrupted pagination, and a single, unified reference list. The dissertation cannot just be a series of reprints of publications.

The dissertation may contain a mixture of publication chapters and conventional chapters, with the category of each chapter clearly identified and, for publication chapters, referenced.

Where there are multi-authored publications included in the dissertation, the student must acknowledge the role and contribution of the co-authors. This may be achieved, for example, through a short statement at the beginning of the relevant chapter.

All submitted dissertations are subject to an academic integrity and plagiarism check, normally through Turnitin, which will include any integrated publications as chapters as they

form part of the dissertation. Appropriately acknowledged and referenced integrated publications will pass the check.

Length

It is acknowledged that the integration of publication chapters within the dissertation is likely to lead to some duplication as each publication will have self-contained components that may overlap with other chapters. As a result, the overall word count may exceed the standard word limit for the degree, but this should be discussed with supervisors and should only be used to address where there is duplication.

Examination

As for all research degrees, the examination will be subject to Section 9. The dissertation must be coherent, consistent and comprehensive so that it demonstrates the student's contribution clearly to the examiners. This guidance does not set a requirement on the examiners to accept publication chapters, and they may decide that it is inappropriate and make a recommendation on that basis.

The inclusion of publication chapters does not of itself verify the quality or significance of the work in meeting the criteria for the award of a research degree. The outcome of the examination will be decided by the Research Degrees Examination Board in response to the recommendation of the examiners.

Copyright

Authors should follow the terms of their publishing agreement. It is rare for publishers to prevent the incorporation of published material within a dissertation for assessment purposes, but it may be necessary to redact any publisher-owned material from the final version of the dissertation before it is submitted and made publicly available (see Section 9.6.2).

<div align="right">**ANNEX 6**</div>

Guidance for online oral examinations

1. An online oral examination by video link with one or more remote participants may be held where the candidate and the examiners agree to this approach and with School PGR Director and the Faculty PGR Director approval (see Section 9.4.8). The guidance below provides information on the preparation for online oral examinations.

2. The candidate and/or any or all examiners may participate remotely in an oral examination. No pressure must be put on any party to assent to the oral examination being conducted partly or fully online. All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that the candidate is not disadvantaged compared with the standard oral examination. The School PGR Director and the Faculty PGR Director must be confident that the candidate is content with an online oral examination before they approve the request. In addition, the Faculty PGR Director may decide to appoint an experienced academic as an Independent Chair if they decide that this would assist in ensuring the examination is fair and conducted in accordance with the University's regulations (see Section 9.3.2). If the candidate is a remote participant, the Faculty PGR Director may require that an approved independent person, such as a member of academic staff from another academic institution, is present with the candidate for the oral examination.

3. The video conferencing platform used for online oral examinations must be supported and licenced by the University of Bristol (IT Services provide information on appropriate platforms). The internal examiner or, where there are only external examiners, the Independent Chair is responsible for arranging an online oral examination.

4. Where an online oral examination is proposed, the following points should be observed:

    a) The technology used must accommodate the anticipated needs of the examination.

    b) The quality of the equipment to be used and the quality of the internet connection (particularly for the remote participant/s) must be taken into account when agreeing and arranging an online oral examination.

    c) The online video conferencing facility and any required equipment should be available for sufficient time for the examination to take place. If there is doubt about the length of time required, every effort should be made to ensure that possible overrunning can be accommodated. It is recommended that any required equipment is are booked for at least one hour beyond the anticipated length of the examination.

    d) Time should be allowed in advance of the examination for all parties to undertake a short familiarisation session in the use of the technology. It is recommended that a trial run is undertaken prior to the oral examination to ensure that the technology used meets requirements.

    e) If the examiners are at different sites, they must take account of their need to share their preliminary reports and consult privately with each other on the conduct of the examination.

    f) Any materials brought by the candidate into the room during an online oral examination should be identified at the start of the examination.

5. Online oral examinations will not be routinely recorded.

6. Appeals will be conducted under the University's standard procedures. Student may wish to contact [Just Ask](), a confidential service provided by Bristol Students' Union, for advice on the appeals process.

<div align="right">**ANNEX 7**</div>

Criteria for award of research degrees

Using the descriptors for qualifications at doctoral and Masters level developed by the QAA as part of the framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, the University has developed the following explicit, yet generic criteria for the award of research doctoral and Masters degrees:

For all research degrees

1) The dissertation should:
    (a) 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;
    (b) consist of the candidate's own account of their investigations;
    (c) 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;
    (d) show the exercise of critical judgment with regard to both the candidate's own work and that of other scholars in the field; and
    (e) be an integrated whole and present a coherent argument.

2) The dissertation and the oral examination together must demonstrate that the candidate has:
    (a) an 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
    (b) the ability to put forward arguments in an appropriate form, both orally and in writing.

Masters degrees by research

3) In addition to the requirements in 1) and 2), the dissertation submitted for a Masters degree by research should represent a contribution to knowledge.

Doctoral degrees

4) The dissertation submitted for a doctoral degree should, in addition to the requirements in 1) and 2), represent a significant and original contribution to knowledge, worthy of publication or dissemination in whole, or in part, in a form appropriate to the discipline.

5) For candidature by published work, the work submitted should in addition:
    (a) relate in a coherent way to the field of knowledge and represent a significant and original contribution; and
    (b) be accompanied by a substantial commentary in the candidate's own words linking the published work and outlining its coherence and

        significance, and making clear the extent of the contribution of others to the work submitted.

6) For candidature by dissertation or by published work, the work submitted and the oral examination together must, in addition to the requirements in 4), demonstrate that the candidate has the capacity to pursue independently original research based on a good understanding of the relevant techniques and concepts.

7) Definitions:

    (a) *Dissertation*
        A dissertation may, with the approval of the faculty, take the form of work relevant to the professional practice in which the degree is embedded, such as portfolios of work and project reports. In all cases these shall be accompanied by a commentary providing a critical evaluation of the candidate's work in relation to the academic and research context. The commentary will generally serve as the implicit agenda for the oral examination. The term "dissertation" should be interpreted accordingly.

    (b) Research degrees including creative work
        Where a candidate submits work which includes images, artefacts or other creative work, the dissertation comprises the creative element and a written commentary together. The creative work should be clearly presented, in an appropriate form and accompanied by a commentary that provides a discursive treatment of the creative work and sets it in its research context. The commentary is normally not less than 30,000 words and generally serves as the implicit agenda for the oral examination. The final submission should include some permanent record of the creative element, combined in an appropriate way with the commentary.

    (c) Originality
        Originality, in the context of the research described in a dissertation or work submitted, means making a contribution to learning, for example through the discovery of new knowledge or the application of existing knowledge in new situations, the connection of previously unrelated facts, the development of new theory or the revision of previously held views, or the development of new research methods.

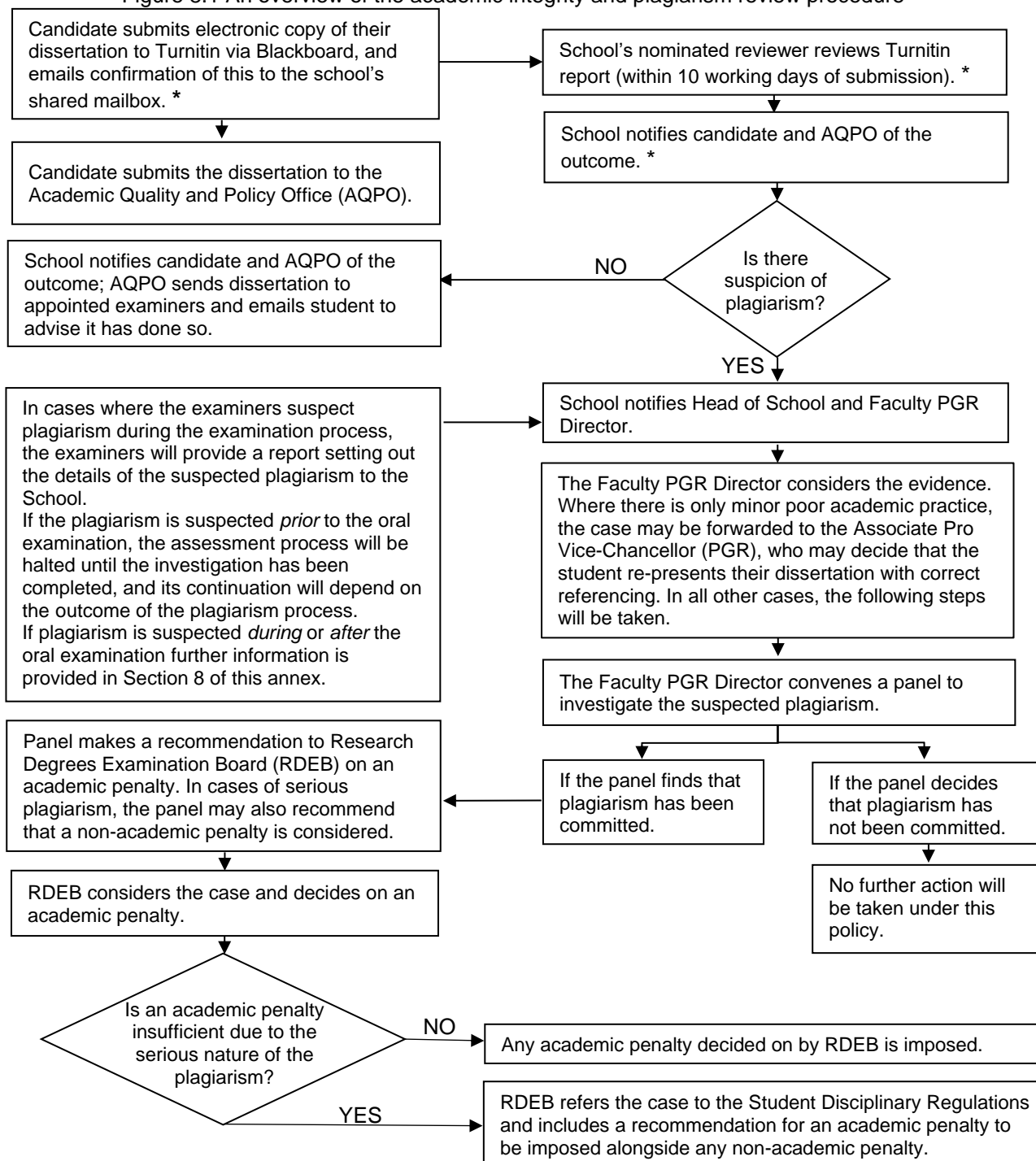   *(d) Professional doctorates*
        Professional doctorates are research degrees based on research embedded in professional practice. They may include taught components at level M/7 or above, which are assessed separately from the dissertation. Further information is available in the regulations for the specific degree (Annexes 1 and 2) and in the programme specifications for the degree.

Academic integrity and plagiarism reviews

1. As set out in Section 9.2 of this Code, all dissertations submitted for a research degree are subject to an academic integrity and plagiarism review before the assessment process starts. Dissertations may also be subject to a separate investigation if plagiarism or another transgression is suspected during or after the assessment process. Figure 8.1 provides an overview of the academic integrity and plagiarism review with the detail of the procedure set out in the subsequent text.

Figure 8.1 An overview of the academic integrity and plagiarism review procedure

```
┌──────────────────────────────────┐          ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
│ Candidate submits electronic     │          │ School's nominated reviewer      │
│ copy of their dissertation to    │─────────▶│ reviews Turnitin report (within  │
│ Turnitin via Blackboard, and     │          │ 10 working days of submission).* │
│ emails confirmation of this to   │          └──────────────────────────────────┘
│ the school's shared mailbox. *   │                         │
└──────────────────────────────────┘                         ▼
                │                          ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
                ▼                          │ School notifies candidate and    │
┌──────────────────────────────────┐      │ AQPO of the outcome. *           │
│ Candidate submits the            │      └──────────────────────────────────┘
│ dissertation to the Academic     │                         │
│ Quality and Policy Office (AQPO). │                        ▼
└──────────────────────────────────┘                  ◇ Is there
                                               NO    suspicion of
┌──────────────────────────────────┐  ◀────────────   plagiarism? ◇
│ School notifies candidate and    │                         │
│ AQPO of the outcome; AQPO sends  │                       YES ▼
│ dissertation to appointed        │      ┌──────────────────────────────────┐
│ examiners and emails student to  │      │ School notifies Head of School   │
│ advise it has done so.           │◀─────│ and Faculty PGR Director.        │
└──────────────────────────────────┘      └──────────────────────────────────┘
```

- In cases where the examiners suspect plagiarism during the examination process, the examiners will provide a report setting out the details of the suspected plagiarism to the School.
- If the plagiarism is suspected *prior* to the oral examination, the assessment process will be halted until the investigation has been completed, and its continuation will depend on the outcome of the plagiarism process.
- If plagiarism is suspected *during* or *after* the oral examination further information is provided in Section 8 of this annex.

- School notifies Head of School and Faculty PGR Director.

- The Faculty PGR Director considers the evidence. Where there is only minor poor academic practice, the case may be forwarded to the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR), who may decide that the student re-presents their dissertation with correct referencing. In all other cases, the following steps will be taken.

- The Faculty PGR Director convenes a panel to investigate the suspected plagiarism.

- If the panel finds that plagiarism has been committed.

- If the panel decides that plagiarism has not been committed.
  - No further action will be taken under this policy.

- Panel makes a recommendation to Research Degrees Examination Board (RDEB) on an academic penalty. In cases of serious plagiarism, the panel may also recommend that a non-academic penalty is considered.

- RDEB considers the case and decides on an academic penalty.

◇ Is an academic penalty insufficient due to the serious nature of the plagiarism? ◇

- NO → Any academic penalty decided on by RDEB is imposed.

- YES → RDEB refers the case to the Student Disciplinary Regulations and includes a recommendation for an academic penalty to be imposed alongside any non-academic penalty.

2. Submission to Turnitin and the review

2.1 Details of how to submit dissertations to Turnitin will be provided in Faculty guidelines which will be made available to students at least twelve months before their final submission date.

2.2 After the student has submitted to Turnitin, the reviewer nominated by the School must review the text comparison report within ten working days.

2.3 In exceptional circumstances, where there are contractual, security or safety obligations and where this has been approved by the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR), a manual check on academic integrity and plagiarism will be undertaken by the supervisors with the outcome reported to the candidate and to the Academic Quality and Policy Office (see Section 9.2.3 of the Code).

3. Where the reviewer finds no suspected plagiarism

3.1 Where the nominated reviewer finds no suspected plagiarism in the dissertation, the School must report the outcome to the candidate and to the Academic Quality and Policy Office. The dissertation will be sent for examination.

4. Where the reviewer finds suspected plagiarism

4.1 Where the nominated reviewer finds suspected plagiarism, the School must notify the Head of School and the Faculty PGR Director as soon as possible, in writing, with the relevant evidence. The School must also inform the candidate, the main supervisor and the Academic Quality and Policy Office.

4.2 The Faculty PGR Director (or nominee) will consider the evidence and, where they consider it to be minor poor academic practice, may forward the case to the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR) for a decision.

    4.2.1 The Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR) may decide that it is minor poor academic practice, and that the student must therefore re-present their dissertation to Turnitin and to the Academic Quality and Policy Office with correct referencing

    4.2.2 The Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR) will set a deadline of up to four weeks from the notification of the decision to the student, with any necessary support to be provided by the student's supervisors. In exceptional cases, the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR) may decide on a longer period and may grant extensions to the deadline.

    4.2.3 The Faculty PGR Director (or nominee) must inform the candidate, the main supervisor, the Head of School and the Academic Quality and Policy Office of the decision of poor academic practice.

4.3   In all other cases, the Faculty PGR Director must convene a faculty panel to investigate the suspected plagiarism, which will involve the panel interviewing the student. If the panel has been set up because of other transgressions in academic integrity are suspected (see Section 9 below), the panel will investigate those suspected transgressions. The Faculty PGR Director is responsible for ensuring that the candidate and main supervisor are notified of the decision to convene a panel.

4.4   The panel must consist of at least three academic members of staff without previous direct involvement with the student, including (i) a member of the student's home School and (ii) a member of another School.

4.6   The Faculty PGR Director must appoint a nominee with appropriate experience to chair the panel. To maintain impartiality, the Faculty PGR Director must not chair or be a member of the panel.

4.7   The Faculty Education Manager (or nominee) must attend to provide advice on regulations and is also responsible for ensuring that a formal note of the interview is taken.

4.8   The purpose of the interview is to determine whether plagiarism (or other transgressions in academic integrity – see Section 9 below) has occurred and to allow the student to make representations and to present mitigating factors.

4.9   Information and evidence circulated to the panel must be made available to the student in advance of the panel interview.

4.10   An adviser, friend or other representative (such as Just Ask) may accompany the student to the interview. This adviser, friend or representative may address the meeting and may confer with the student, but they must not answer any questions on behalf of the student.

4.11   It is not necessary to record the interview, but the Chair may decide that a recording is appropriate in exceptional circumstances.

4.12   The Chair of the panel must agree the formal note of the interview and ensure that all participants, including the student, receive a copy.

4.13   Where the student declines to attend the interview, the panel should continue the investigation with the available evidence. Any obstruction or lack of engagement from the student must be included in the panel's report to the Research Degrees Examination Board (see Section 6 below).

5.   The panel's decisions

5.1   Following the investigation, the panel must first decide whether the student has committed the offence of plagiarism (or another transgression in academic integrity – see Section 9 below).

5.2   If the panel decides that the offence has not been proved, no further action will be taken under this procedure. The Chair of the panel must inform, in writing, the

candidate, the main supervisor, the Head of School, the Faculty PGR Director, and the Academic Quality and Policy Office of this decision. The dissertation will be sent out for examination

5.3   If the panel finds that the offence of plagiarism (or other transgression) has been committed, the panel must determine the seriousness, taking into account (i) whether it is the first or subsequent offence, and (ii) the extent and significance of plagiarism (or other transgression) in the dissertation.

6.   Referral to the Research Degrees Examination Board

6.1   Where the panel finds that the offence of plagiarism (or other transgression) has been committed, the panel must write to the Research Degrees Examination Board (RDEB) to recommend a penalty taken from the list in 7.1 below. In cases of serious plagiarism (or other transgression), the panel may also recommend that a non-academic penalty be considered.

6.2   The report to RDEB must set out the finding of plagiarism (or other transgression) and must include:

6.2.1   a brief summary of the evidence considered;

6.2.3   the formal note of the interview, or details of why the student declined an interview;

6.2.4   the factors taken into account in reaching a decision;

6.2.5   any mitigation provided by the student; and

6.2.6   the recommendation/s.

6.3   The Chair of the panel must inform the student and main supervisor of the recommendation to RDEB, but the report to RDEB remains confidential at this stage.

7. RDEB decision

1.1   RDEB must consider the panel's report and may decide to:

7.1.1   impose no penalty beyond reporting the outcome to the Head of School and the main supervisor for future reference, either permanently or for a specified period;

7.1.2   require re-presentation of all or part of the dissertation;

7.1.3   exclude the student from the award of the degree, which may be either permanent or for a stated period, and may be absolute or subject to compliance with stipulated requirements; or

7.1.4   award a lower qualification than that for which the student was registered where regulations permit this.

7.2   The penalty will depend on the seriousness of the offence with any mitigating factors reported by the panel being taken into account when determining the penalty.

7.3   Where RDEB decides that an academic penalty is sufficient, it must inform the student and main supervisor of its decision in writing and include a copy of the panel's report. The Head of School, the Chair of the panel and the Faculty Education Manager must also be informed of the decision.

7.4   If the penalty imposed is re-presentation of all or part of the dissertation the student must be given a deadline for the re-presentation, usually not exceeding four weeks from the date of notification by RDEB of the decision. In exceptional circumstances, RDEB may decide on a longer initial period and the RDEB Chair (or nominee) may grant extensions to the deadline.

7.5   Where RDEB considers that an academic penalty is insufficient due to the serious nature of the plagiarism (or other transgression), it may instead refer the case to be dealt with under the Student Disciplinary Regulations as set out in Section 8 below. RDEB will not impose any penalty itself in those cases but may recommend to the Vice-Chancellor that a specified academic penalty is imposed alongside any non-academic penalties made under the Student Disciplinary Regulations.

7.6   Details of the allegation and penalty must be recorded in the RDEB minutes. Cases of plagiarism in a dissertation submitted for a research degree (or other transgression) should normally be mentioned in student references, unless any time limit set by RDEB under 7.1.1 above has expired.

7.7   The Academic Quality and Policy Office will keep a central record of plagiarism (or other transgression) cases considered by RDEB and report them to University Academic Quality and Standards Committee annually.

8. Procedure in the event of serious plagiarism or other transgression where an academic penalty is considered insufficient

8.1   If RDEB considers that the plagiarism (or other transgression) is so serious that a penalty other than an academic penalty should be considered, the matter should be dealt with under the Student Disciplinary Regulations. RDEB will make a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor, through the University Secretary, to this effect, including a recommendation for a specified academic penalty to be imposed alongside any non-academic penalty.

8.2   Where an offence of plagiarism (or other transgression) is dealt with under the Student Disciplinary Regulations, the Vice-Chancellor (or nominee) will make the final decision on penalties and may impose any penalty or penalties available under the Student Disciplinary Regulations and the specified academic penalty recommended by RDEB.

9. Where plagiarism or other transgression in academic integrity are suspected during or after the assessment process

9.1   In cases where examiners suspect plagiarism or other transgressions in academic integrity, such as falsifying data, during the assessment process, the procedure set out in Sections 4 to 8 above will be followed. The examiners must provide a report setting out the details of the suspected plagiarism or other transgressions to the School as evidence to inform the deliberations of the panel convened under Section 4 above.

9.2   If examiners have any suspicions of plagiarism or other transgressions *prior* to the oral examination, the assessment process must be halted so that the academic integrity and plagiarism procedure may be completed. Continuation of the assessment process will depend upon the outcome this procedure.

9.3   If an examiner suspects plagiarism or other transgression *during* the oral examination, they may ask questions of the candidate to inform their view more fully. If the concerns remain, the oral examination must be stopped. The internal examiner (or Independent Chair if present) will inform the candidate that the oral examination has been stopped due to suspected plagiarism or other transgression. The internal examiner (or Independent Chair if present) will then notify the Academic Quality and Policy Office. The examiners must provide a report setting out the details of the suspected plagiarism or other transgression so that it may be investigated through the procedure in Sections 4 to 8 above. Continuation of the examination process, including a rescheduled oral examination, will depend upon the outcome of the procedure.

9.4   If plagiarism or other transgression is suspected *after* the oral examination, the procedure set out in Sections 4 to 8 will be followed to the extent practicable.

9.5   Where an award has been made and the student is no longer registered at the University, any allegations of plagiarism or other transgression in academic integrity should be referred in the first instance to RDEB for investigation. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as RDEB considers reasonable and appropriate in the circumstances with the aim of ensuring a fair process. The outcome of the investigation will be reported to the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education), who may consult with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) before reaching a decision on the case. If the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) considers that the award has been improperly obtained, the case will be referred to Senate for consideration of whether to recommend to the Board of Trustees that the award be withdrawn under Ordinance 16.

Guidance for research degree examiners on what constitutes minor errors in a dissertation

The following are allowable as minor errors under examiners' recommendation B (*award subject to the correction of minor errors*):

- Typographical errors; but if the errors, though trivial individually, are so numerous as to suggest carelessness on the part of the candidate, or so intrusive as to distract the reader's attention from the argument of the dissertation, the examiners would be fully justified in making recommendation C (*award subject to correction of errors or omissions of substance*) instead of B;

- Minor amendments and/or replacement of, or additions to, the text, references or diagrams;

- Other, more extensive, corrections **as long as they do not require major re-working or re-interpretation of the intellectual content of the dissertation**.

It should be possible to list the individual corrections required and once carried out for it to be easily verified that the corrections have been made.

The time needed to make minor corrections must be **no more than 28 days** after notification from the Research Degrees Examination Board at which the examiners' reports were considered.

The University requires the internal examiner to confirm to the candidate and to the Academic Quality and Policy Office that the corrections have been satisfactorily completed before the degree certificate will be issued. Degree certificates will not be issued unless the Academic Quality and Policy Office has received this confirmation. In examinations where there is no internal examiner, minor corrections must be approved by one of the following: (1) an external examiner, (2) the Independent Chair, or (3) another University of Bristol academic nominated by the School. The Independent Chair is responsible for ensuring that approval from any of these sources is reported in writing to the candidate and to the Academic Quality and Policy Office.

If the corrections required are more substantial than those indicated here, the examiners should tick one of the alternative recommendations (e.g. C, degree to be awarded once errors or omissions of substance have been corrected to the satisfaction of the examiner). Where there are numerous instances of errors that are individually minor but when taken together are deemed by the examiners to form a significant undertaking for the candidate to correct, a recommendation of errors of substance may be made.

The guidance from research degree examiners on corrections and resubmissions

1. Examiners must provide clear, comprehensive guidance on corrections and resubmissions to candidates. The guidance must indicate the necessary conditions required from the candidate, which – if met – will lead to the examiners making a recommendation for the award. The following points aim to assist examiners in setting out their guidance.

2. The guidance must specify the parts of the work where improvement is needed. This must be sufficiently detailed to give the candidate enough direction to achieve the required standard, while allowing room for the candidate to use their initiative. Guidance for the correction of minor errors will necessarily be narrower and more detailed, including specific editorial comments where needed.

3. The guidance must be clear and explicit to provide appropriate direction to the candidate. It must not include language to suggest that the improvements required are optional. Phrases such as 'the candidate might wish to consider' and general vague statements are to be avoided.

4. The guidance must define the limit of the changes required, which the examiners must deem to be achievable within the time permitted for their recommended outcome (see Section 9.5).

5. There must be joint guidance from the examiners that represents their combined view of the work. The examiners must agree exactly what the candidate is required to do and communicate this in their combined guidance, which they must sense check to ensure that it is coherent and complete. A separate list from each examiner is not permissible as this may lead to inconsistencies and duplication. (If, exceptionally, the examiners cannot agree on a joint report, they should submit separate final reports.)

6. Examiners should arrange the guidance appropriately in relation to the nature of the improvements required based on, for example, chapters or specific aspects across the work.

7. Examiners must not direct candidates to undertake further work beyond the requirements of the award. Publications, for example, are not part of the criteria for a research degree and so the preparation of publications must not be included as part of the guidance.

8. When the candidate provides the revised dissertation, examiners must only consider whether the corrections required by them, as set out in their guidance, have been satisfactorily completed. Examiners should not raise new points at this stage unless the candidate has introduced a new problem in undertaking the revisions.

ANNEX 11

Policy for research degrees by distance learning

1. **Introduction**

   1.1. This policy defines the requirements for research degrees that are conducted through distance learning. It should be read in conjunction with the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*, which sets out the University's requirements in relation to all research students. The additional considerations that must be taken into account for distance learning are presented below.

2. **Definition of Research Degrees by Distance Learning**

   2.1. Students studying for Research Degrees by Distance Learning undertake the majority of their research away from the University either in the UK or overseas. This is combined with compulsory visits to the University and appropriate remote support.

   2.2. Research Degrees by Distance Learning will be appropriate for students where relevant resources are largely available locally or online.

   2.3. The significant factors in determining whether a Research Degree by Distance Learning is appropriate are a) where the primary means of supervision is remote and b) where the student's research project is not dependent on the University's on-site facilities.

   2.4. Research students who are away from the University to undertake fieldwork, etc. are not classified as studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning. There are however elements of this policy that may act as good practice for those students, such as how to engage with the University when not on campus.

   2.5. A Research Degree by Distance Learning is not a split-site PhD, where the student spends time at both the University and another institution within a fully collaborative structure. For split-site PhDs a written agreement is always required with the other organisation, while for distance learning the primary relationship is normally with the research student.

   2.6. If however a student who wishes to study by distance learning has a research project that is dependent on an employer or another organisation (for example, a dependency on facilities or data), a written agreement must be put in place (see Section 3).

   2.7. The expectations set out in this policy may also be relevant to educational partnerships developed through other routes, where the location of study is deemed to be distance learning.

3. Distance learning and partnership agreements

3.1. A partnership agreement is required for a Research Degree by Distance Learning if the student's project is **dependent** on an employer or another organisation (see the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Educational Collaborative Arrangements*). The agreement may, for example, be limited to covering the dependent use of facilities or data and to any intellectual property issues, depending on the nature of the project and on the University's relationship with the other organisation.

3.2. The approval process, which includes a due diligence consideration and an enhanced approval route where a partnership is required (see Section 6), will be completed before any written agreement is set up.

3.3. If the student is based in, or has access to, an environment that is conducive to research (such as through a research or educational organisation) but is not dependent on it, a letter must be obtained from the organisation to confirm its general support. A partnership agreement is not required in these cases.

4. Principles

4.1. A Research Degree by Distance Learning offers a high level of flexibility for the student, but it requires the same commitment for serious study as for any research degree. It is therefore vital that the student is able to make the commitment and that the University is in position to offer the necessary support.

4.2. The student must receive clear and realistic advice on expectations in relation to distance learning, including on the level of autonomy placed upon them, on the requirement to attend the University at certain times, and on the extent of support that will be available to them.

4.3. Students studying through distance learning are required to ensure that they have access to an appropriate local research environment so that they can complete their research project. There must also be access to the relevant research environment at the University through a combination of remote links and scheduled visits.

4.4. Schools must decide whether they wish to offer Research Degrees by Distance Learning as an option for their research degree programmes. There may however be cases where it will not feasible, particularly in lab-based disciplines where appropriate local provision is not available or where regular access to University on-site facilities is required. The approval and admissions process (see Section 6) requires a full consideration of whether appropriate access to resources and support is in place.

4.5. Research Degrees by Distance Learning may be undertaken on either a full-time or part-time basis and are subject to the normal minimum and maximum periods of study set out in the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.*

4.6. Studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning is not permissible if it contravenes the regulations of any funders.

4.7. Successful students will receive an award from the University of Bristol. The formal degree title for Research Degrees by Distance Learning is the same as for any other location of study as the criteria for the award are identical.

5. International students

5.1. Research Degrees by Distance Learning are open to international students, and their visits to the University must be in compliance with the requirements of the UK Government at the time of travel. These requirements may change over the course of the programme.

5.2. International students studying for Research Degrees by Distance Learning must follow the current requirements to secure visitor visas for visits to the University. More information is available on the [Student Visa Services webpages](#).

5.3. The University cannot guarantee that an international student studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning will be able to secure a visitor visa for each visit. International students will be provided with appropriate documentation from the University to support applications for visitor visas, but the responsibility to meet visa requirements remains with the student. See Section 12 for more information on visits and visas.

6. Approval and admissions

6.1. Schools must decide whether they wish to include a distance learning option for their research degrees in the prospectus and in any promotional materials. Where distance learning is included, an acknowledgement of the requirement for visitor visas for international students and a link to [Student Visa Services webpages](#) must be included (see Section 5).

6.2. For schools that have decided to allow Research Degrees by Distance Learning, an individual approval process is followed for each applicant. It is recommended that supervisors and applicants start the process as early as possible as there are a number of factors to consider.

6.3. Applicants must meet the general admission requirements for research degree programmes. Additional information will also be collected through the application process to ensure that both the prospective student and the school are in a position to meet the extra commitments required for distance learning.

6.4. Prospective students who wish to study by distance learning must demonstrate the following:
- An ability to undertake research independently as shown, for example, by previous distance learning experience, the completion of independent

research projects, presentations at conferences, and professional or academic publications.
- Evidence that the student's home location is suitable for undertaking the research and that there is access to appropriate research materials and resources.
- Access to appropriate technological equipment and the internet to allow remote contact.

6.5. Prospective students must articulate their motivation for requesting to study by distance learning.

6.6. Prospective students are required to confirm that they can meet the financial demands of studying by distance learning, which covers tuition fees and additional costs (see Section 8).

6.7. If the prospective student's research is dependent on an employer or another organisation (see Section 3), a letter from the employer/organisation confirming its support for the application and its understanding that a written agreement will be required must be included as part of the application process. The school must also ensure that a due diligence check is undertaken on the organisation. The process to develop the written agreement will be initiated once approval has been given.

6.8. If the prospective student is employed by, or has a relationship with, an organisation and will benefit from its research environment but where there will be no dependency, a letter from the employer/organisation confirming its general support must be included as part of the application process.

6.9. As part of the application process, the school must address the resource requirements for supporting the distance learning needs of the student. Appropriate supervision (see Section 9), suitable technology for remote contact and support including access to relevant University systems, and links to the necessary research environment must all be in place. The University's commitment, including in terms of supervisory support and the resources available to the student, must be fully articulated.

6.10. The details of compulsory visits to the University (see Section 12) and for annual progress reviews (see Section 16) must be agreed as part of the application process. For international students, guidance must be sought from Student Visa Advice Services on visa requirements for visits.

6.11. The application must be agreed at school, faculty and University levels:

a) Where the prospective student's research is *not* dependent on the an employer or another organisation, the following approval route is followed:
- Main supervisor;
- School PGR Director or Head of School;
- Faculty PGR Director; and

- Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR)

b) If the prospective student's research is dependent on using the facilities of another organisation (see Section 3), and a written agreement will therefore have to be developed, an enhanced approval route is in place to match the authorisation required for all new educational collaborative arrangements:
  - Main supervisor;
  - School PGR Director or Head of School;
  - Faculty PGR Director;
  - Faculty Financial Controller;
  - Dean of Faculty; and
  - Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR)

6.12. An offer of a place must not be made to the student until formal approval has been authorised. The offer letter will set out the particular expectations placed on the student, including on compulsory visits and on any visa requirements.

7. Changes in location of study

7.1. An application to study a Research Degree by Distance Learning is normally only made during the admissions process. In exceptional circumstances, current campus-based research students may be allowed to transfer their location of study to distance learning. In those cases, the additional information required as part of the application process (see Section 6) must still be completed and approved before the transfer will be allowed.

7.2. For international students who in exceptional circumstances wish to change from studying at the University with a student visa (formally known as Tier 4) to studying by distance learning, advice must be sought from Student Visa Services. A move to distance learning will require the withdrawal of the University's sponsorship of the student's visa, with the student relying on securing visitor visas for all further visits to the University.

7.3. Students studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning may make a request to change to campus-based study. Possible reasons for such a request may include changes to the student's personal or employment circumstances. Approval for a change in the location of study must be sought from the Faculty PGR Director, who will make a decision based on the feasibility of the request for both the student (in terms of practical arrangements and any visa requirements) and for the school (in terms of available resources). There is no automatic right to change from distance learning to campus-based study.

7.4. For international students studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning who wish to change to another location of study, advice must be sought from the Student Visa Services. A move to study at the University requires a student visa (formally known as Tier 4), which is sponsored by the University and is secured in the student's country of residence.

8. Student fees and costs

8.1. The tuition fees for students studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning are the same as for campus-based study. Students also have to arrange and cover the costs for their visits to the University, including travel, accommodation and any visa requirements. These additional costs do not form part of the tuition fees and this must be made clear in public information and in communications with prospective students (see Section 15).

9. Supervision

9.1. In all cases, the supervisory requirements set out in the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* must be met.

9.2. The significant supervisory characteristic for students studying by distance learning will be that they engage with their supervisors mostly through electronic means. There should also be a clear understanding between the student and the supervisors on what constitutes reasonable access if advice is required outside of pre-arranged supervisory meetings.

9.3. Supervisors for distance learning research students must have an awareness of this particular form of supervision and must have completed a University of Bristol supervisor development session within the last two years.

9.4. The visits to the University (see Section 12) provide important opportunities for face-to-face supervision.

9.5. Supervisors must be aware of their responsibilities in relation to students studying by distance learning. The time and commitment required for distance learning supervision will be no less, and may be more, than for supervision of students based at the University.

9.6. Supervisors must keep a full record of all correspondence with the student, including around progress, and supervisory meetings must be fully documented. Students must keep their own record of their engagement with their supervisors.

9.7. Where a written agreement is in place, a formal local contact or co-supervisor may be identified to assist in supporting the student. For local co-supervisors, this may be as an honorary member of staff.

9.8. Where the student is based in an organisation that supports an environment that is conducive to research, an informal local support contact may be available to the student. In these cases, arrangements should be made between the supervisors and the local support contact. It must be made clear that any arrangements are of an informal nature and the local contact is not a member of the supervisory team.

10. Student support

10.1. The University has a duty of care for the welfare of its students. The school and the main supervisor must ensure that pastoral considerations are included as part of the supervisory process. It is acknowledged that access to the University's on-site Student Services may be limited for students not based on campus.

11. Student representation

11.1. Students studying for Research Degrees by Distance Learning are included in the University student representation system for research students.

11.2. Schools must ensure that students studying for Research Degrees by Distance Learning have opportunities to engage with Student-Staff Liaison Committees (SSLCs). It may not be possible for distance learning research students to attend SSLCs in person.

12. Attendance at the University

12.1. Students studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning are required to visit the University at regular intervals during their normal period of study. The minimum requirement is for a two-week visit each academic year, plus a further visit for the oral examination. The requirement is the same for both full-time and part-time students. In some cases, it may be appropriate for the student to attend the University for further visits and/or for a longer period. Visits must however remain within a distance learning structure and must not impact negatively on any visa requirements. For international students, advice must be sought from Student Visa Services in these cases.

12.2. For international students, the school must:
   a) Ensure there is a process in place to ensure that international students present their visitor visas for scanning to Student Visa Services upon arrival for each visit to the UK, prior to any engagement with their studies.
   b) Ensure that students relying on visitor visas are referred to the [Student Visa Services webpages](#) prior to each visit to the University so that they are aware of current visa rules.
   c) Provide a formal visit invitation letter to the student prior to each visit to assist in the visa application process. In some cases, the Faculty is responsible for providing the invitation letter.

12.3. The first visit to the University allows for a formal induction, coupled with intensive research skills training and individually tailored project development with the supervisory team. Opportunities to engage in research community activities should form part of the visit. Subsequent visits should continue to address the developmental and engagement needs of the student.

12.4. The school is responsible for ensuring that students studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning have access to an appropriate place to work and suitable equipment during visits.

12.5. Any variation from the visit schedule as agreed as part of the approval process (see Section 6) must be agreed by the main supervisor and the School PGR Director. For international students, advice must be sought from Student Visa Services on whether there are any implications related to visa requirements.

12.6. An exemption for non-attendance at a scheduled visit, where it has not been possible to rearrange the visit, will only be granted in exceptional circumstances with the agreement of the Faculty PGR Director.

12.7. The University cannot guarantee that international students will be able to secure a visa for each visit (see Section 5). In the event that students are unable to secure a visa, they may have to apply for suspensions of study until their situation is resolved.

13. Training and resources

13.1. A student studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning must have access to appropriate research skills training, which is normally required or provided by schools and faculties, and to the University's Personal and Professional Development Programme. The training may be provided as part of student's visits to the University and online resources may be available in some areas. Some University-based training may only be available at certain times of the year, which may require a student's visit to be rearranged.

13.2. As for all research degrees, supervisors and students must regularly review training needs. For distance learning research students, an initial consideration of training needs must take place before the first visit. As there are only limited online resources, particular consideration must be given to where training has to be undertaken during student visits. In addition, supervisors and students should explore opportunities to utilise new skills training either during visits or at the student's home location.

14. Research community

14.1. Participating in the research community, including through opportunities to network with their peers, is an important aspect of study for all research students, including those studying by distance learning. Engaging with the research community forms part of the student's visits to the University, together with online provision and connections to the school's research community.

15. Provision of information

15.1. Public information and communications to prospective students must provide clear and realistic guidance on the expectations for distance learning, including on how

the student will engage with the University and details on tuition fees and additional costs (see Section 8).

15.2. Students studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning will have access to online information, containing dedicated guidance for distance learning, access to e-library resources and links to training opportunities.

16. Progress and review arrangements

16.1. The annual progress review is equivalent to the process followed for research students based at the University. Students studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning may be required to be in attendance at the University for progress reviews (as part of a visit), or the process may be conducted through electronic means. How annual progress reviews will be organised will be set as part of the application process (see Section 6), and any variation from the agreed approach must be approved by the Faculty PGR Director.

17. Assessment

17.1. The assessment process, including the submission of the dissertation and the subsequent oral examination, is set out in the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.*

17.2. Students studying for a Research Degree by Distance Learning should be informed of the date of the oral examination in good time so that they are able to make appropriate travel, accommodation and any visa arrangements. For international students, this should normally be 12 – 16 weeks in advance.

17.3. It should be noted that the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* does allow for oral examinations to be held elsewhere or online.

18. Reviewing provision

18.1. Schools will monitor the progress and outcomes for students studying for Research Degrees by Distance Learning.

18.2. The University will maintain an oversight of distance learning for research students and will regularly undertake reviews of provision in this area.

18.3. Any written agreements put in place to cover multiple distance learning research students may be subject to the periodic review process (see the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Educational Collaborative Arrangements).*

<div align="right">ANNEX 12</div>

The personal and professional development policy for research students

1. Introduction

1.1. This policy sets out the University approach for the personal and professional development of research students. It should be read in conjunction with the *Regulations and Codes for Research Degree Programmes,* which specifies the University requirements in relation to all research students, including on the development of research and other skills.

2. Definition of personal and professional development

2.1. Personal and professional development for research students relates to the acquisition and application of skills and competencies required for researchers to realise their potential and to be successful. The approach of the University of Bristol builds on the *Vitae Researcher Development Framework*, which is a national reference point in the planning, promotion and support of personal and professional development for researchers in higher education.

2.2. The external context for personal and professional development includes the *Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers,* the *QAA Quality Code* and the Roberts' Review *SET for Success*. In addition, the UK Research and Innovation *Training Grant Guide* specifies that appropriate researcher development training is in place.

2.3. All training and other activities that contribute to the personal and professional development of research students are covered by this policy. This relates to the University's Personal and Professional Development Programme and the training provided by faculties and schools, as well as to external training opportunities. Research students may also develop their personal and professional capabilities as an integral part of their studies, such as giving presentations, working in a team, and through other activities.

3. Principles

3.1. The University is committed to providing personal and professional development opportunities for research students to complement and build on the research and other skills gained through pursuing their research.

3.2. Research students are encouraged to take advantage of the range of opportunities offered to them so that they develop identified strengths and competencies in a timely manner as they progress through their research project and prepare for the next steps of their career.

3.3. All research students have access to a range of training and developmental activities to become innovative and highly employable researchers. There are a range of opportunities, encompassing the University's Personal and Professional Development Programme and the more discipline-specific training provided through schools and faculties. In addition, research students have access to shared training via GW4, an alliance between the universities of Bath, Bristol, Cardiff and Exeter, plus there may be other external training opportunities. It is recognised that other activities, as well as formal training, may also contribute to a research student's personal and professional development.

4. Identifying and recording personal and professional development

4.1. It is recognised that research students come from a wide range of backgrounds and have a variety of prior experience. Research students therefore require tailored training and development opportunities based on an analysis of their needs, as set out in Section 7 of the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.*

4.2. Supervisors and their students should discuss personal and professional development in their regular meetings. Students may require more guidance and support towards the start of their degree, with the expectation that the student will progressively take ownership of their own personal and professional development. Students are encouraged to seek advice and guidance from other sources in tandem with the supervisory relationship.

4.3. Personal and professional development is an essential part of creating successful researchers. It is important to acknowledge and discuss the personal and professional development of a research student as part of their annual progress review (see Section 6.2 of the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes).* Reflections on training completed and other relevant activities undertaken, as well as planning for the future, should form part of the conversation during the annual progress review, forming a holistic evaluation of research progress and of personal and professional development.

4.4. Research students may wish to keep a portfolio of their skills and experience in relation to their personal and professional development to assist them in reflecting on their progress and to build up a full picture over the course of their studies.

<div align="right">**ANNEX 13**</div>

Policy on placements for research students

Introduction

1. This policy defines the University requirements for placements for research students. It sets the standards and framework for the development and management of those arrangements. All University of Bristol research students who undertake placements are covered by this policy.

Definition of placements

2. Placements (which are sometimes referred to as internships) involve research students spending a defined period of time at another organisation to gain work-based practical experience or to undertake activities or research that contributes directly to their training. The host organisation will normally expect that the research student engages with the organisation's objectives during the placement, with a work plan agreed before the placement starts.

3. The policy applies to the following:

    a. Where a research student remains subject to the University's regulations but where there is a transfer of direct day-to-day supervision/management to the host organisation; and
    b. Where the duration is for two weeks or more.

4. Research students who are sponsored by an external funder (including those funded by UK Research Councils) are covered by this policy and may also be subject to specific terms and conditions from their funder in relation to placements. In cases where research students are based at the premises of their external funder for a period of time (for example where the funder is a professional or industrial organisation), a separate placement agreement is not required if this has been covered in the overall student agreement.

5. Illustrative examples of what types of activity require or do not require placement agreements are included at the end of the policy.

6. The policy does **not** apply to the following:

    a. Joint/dual awards;
    b. Joint supervisory arrangements;
    c. Fieldwork or site visits;
    d. Secondments; and
    e. Purely extracurricular employment that research students have arranged for themselves, such as part-time, term-time or vacation work.

7. Research students who are registered at other institutions and who undertake a placement at the University are **not** covered by this policy.

8. Placements will vary depending on research student and supervisor choices, on the funder and on the circumstances. Placements may be an optional opportunity for research students, or a requirement of their programme of study, funded by an external funder. A suspension of study may be required, or a placement may be integral to the programme of study. Placements may be connected to students' research projects, or they may provide opportunities to gain new skills and experience away from the research. This policy sets out the general principles that relate to all types of placements for research students.

Principles

9. The University recognises the value of placements in the professional development and in expanding career options for research students. Potential benefits include opportunities to learn new skills, to enhance employability prospects, to experience other workplaces, and to gain new insights for research projects. Research students are therefore encouraged to take up opportunities offered to them.

10. The University values the opportunities provided by a wide range of organisations that host its research students for placements and aims to have constructive relationships with them.

11. The University has a duty of care for its students, and a member of University staff must be assigned as a point of contact for research students when they are on placements. This would normally be the main supervisor or a nominee. The University-assigned contact has a responsibility to maintain contact with the research student and with the hosting organisation.

12. Organisations that host placements have a responsibility to ensure that research students receive appropriate support and have access to facilities and resources, and that there is a named local supervisor/manager to provide direct guidance for the research student.

13. Research students undertaking placements should be diligent and professional and remain subject to the University's regulations. They should keep their University-assigned contact informed of their progress and of any problems that occur.

14. The decision on whether the research student needs to suspend may be determined by a range of factors, such as requirements of the funding body and the duration of the placement.

Developing placements

15. There is a University process, based on the principles set out in this policy, to assist faculties and schools in developing and approving placements for research students.

16. Placement opportunities will originate from multiple sources. For example, there may be existing links between the University and potential hosting organisations, or research students and their supervisors may locate opportunities themselves.

17. All placements must have a written, legally binding, agreement in place prior to their start. The process to develop a placement agreement will cover a due diligence check on the proposed hosting organisation, a consideration of the support that will be available to the student during the placement, and any necessary visa requirements. The supervisor or nominee must notify the School PGR Director and, with guidance from the Secretary's Office, will work with the proposed hosting organisation to develop the basis for the agreement, which will normally include establishing a work plan for the research student during the placement.

18. The placement agreement will *inter alia* include:
   a) The responsibilities of all relevant parties, including reference to any agreed work plans;
   b) Confirmation that suitable insurance is in place, such as employers' liability cover;
   c) Confirmation that health, safety and welfare requirements are covered;
   d) A consideration of confidentiality and Intellectual Property; and
   e) Provisions for the withdrawal or termination of the agreement if a students' wellbeing is compromised, if there are instances of serious misconduct, or for other reasons.

19. The placement agreement will be signed by the research student, by a representative of the hosting organisation and by the Faculty PGR Director for the relevant faculty.

Annual review process

20. A research student's placement should be considered in the annual progress review process as part of their reflections on, and plans for, their personal and professional development.

Illustrative examples of where a placement agreement is or is not required

- **Example A: Student goes to a third party to conduct work for their PhD and a placement agreement is required**
  Student A is undertaking a PhD on the impact of hypertension drugs on patients with Alzheimer's. The student will be based at a private laboratory for three months testing patient samples to gain expertise in testing techniques and to gather data. During their time at the laboratory, the student will engage with its work and will be managed by a member of its staff. The results of the testing will form part of the student's PhD project. A placement agreement will be required, which will include Intellectual Property considerations.

- **Example B: Student goes to a third party for work-based experience and a placement agreement is required**
  Student B's PhD relates to carbon dating techniques and the student wishes to gain a wider knowledge of relevant sectors to enhance their career options. The student will spend one month at the Plant Museum to work on applications of carbon dating for cataloguing plant specimens. The work will not contribute to Student B's PhD project, but it will provide work-based practical experience. The student will engage fully with the objectives of, and will be managed by, the Plant Museum. There is no

existing Student Agreement in place as the Plant Museum is not involved in the funding of the student's PhD, and a placement agreement must therefore be put in place. As the data or information arising from the placement will not relate to the student's PhD, this does not have to be owned by the student or the University.

- **Example C: Student goes to a facility of a funder/project sponsor and a placement agreement is not required**
  Student C is undertaking a PhD in aeronautical engineering funded by Aerospace plc. As part of their studies, the student will be based at Aerospace plc's research establishment for six months to carry out work that will contribute to their PhD project. Day-to-day management of the student will be undertaken by a member of staff from Aerospace plc. A placement agreement is not required as the arrangements for Student C's placement will be addressed in the overall Studentship Agreement with Aerospace plc.

- **Example D: Student goes to another organisation to learn a new technique and a placement agreement is required**
  Student D's supervisor recommends that the student spends a month as part of their PhD training at a research group in another university to learn a new experimental technique. There is no partnership in place and day-to-day supervision of the student transfers to the other university for the duration. A placement agreement will be required. As the focus of the placement is on learning a new technique rather than in producing results, a provision for the student/University to own the data is not required.

- **Example E: Student goes to another organisation to learn a new technique and a placement agreement is not required**
  Student E wishes to learn how to use a particular technique as part of their PhD project. A research establishment is willing to host the student for a few days to demonstrate how the technique is used. The supervisory team at the University remains responsible for the student and a placement agreement is not required in this case.

Policy for maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave for research students

1. Introduction

1.1 This policy is designed to ensure that individuals with caring responsibilities for young children are treated fairly and consistently and are not treated less favourably than other students as a result of their parental responsibilities. Following the birth or placement of a child, eligible research students can take maternity, adoption, paternity or shared parental leave as appropriate.

2. Definition of terms used

2.1 Maternity leave – a period of up to 52 weeks of leave that may be taken by research students registered at the University of Bristol following the birth of a child.

2.2 Adoption leave - a period of up to 52 weeks of leave that may be taken by research students registered at the University of Bristol following the placement of a child with an adoptive parent.

2.3 Paternity leave – ordinary paternity leave refers to a period of up to ten days leave available to the partner of the person giving birth, the partner of the primary adopter or an intended parent (for those having a baby through a surrogacy agreement).

2.4 Shared parental leave - a mechanism though which a parent may share their partner's entitlement to maternity or adoption leave

3. Terms and Conditions

3.1 Suspension of study

3.1.1 Any research student applying for maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave should submit a request in writing to the Faculty PGR Director for a suspension of study for the relevant period.

3.1.2 Requests for suspension of study should be made on the appropriate form which is available from your school Postgraduate Administrator and require supporting evidence which will either be a MAT1B form or evidence of placement of a child for adoption. (A MATB1 form is issued approximately 15 weeks before the expected week of birth and is normally provided by the midwife).

3.1.3 When the suspension is granted, the student's final submission date will be amended to take these circumstances into account, and the student will be notified of the new submission date by the Faculty.

3.1.4 After the suspension is agreed and signed by the Faculty PGR Director, the Faculty Office should send a copy of the relevant paperwork to the School and the Student Funding Office. The Faculty Office will update the student's record in SITS to reflect the change to the student's registration status. The Student Funding Office will make any appropriate changes to the student's stipend payments as advised by the Faculty Office.

3.2 Payments to students

3.2.1 UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)-funded students will be entitled to payment for maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave as outlined in this policy.

3.2.2 Students who are funded by the University of Bristol PG Scholarship will be entitled to payment for maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave as outlined in this policy.

3.2.3 Students who are funded by their faculty or school will be entitled to payment for maternity, adoption, paternity and shared parental leave as outlined in this policy.

3.2.4 Students who receive external funding either directly from an external organisation or an external award administered through the University of Bristol must consult with their funder to determine whether payments can be made during periods resulting from adoption, paternity and shared parental leave. If the funder does not provide additional money to fund periods of leave, the University is not liable to provide any payment.

3.2.5 Students who are self-funded (and those entitled to tuition fee only awards), are entitled to the periods of leave detailed within this policy, but will not be eligible for any financial support from the University.

3.2.6 Payments made to University-funded students who are either part-time, or only part-funded by the University, will be subject to a pro-rata adjustment in line with the percentage of funding received.

3.3 Students with UKVI student visas (formally known as Tier 4)

3.3.1 In the case of students sponsored by the University under UKVI student visa (formally known as Tier 4), suspension as a result of parental leave may require the University to withdraw sponsorship and for the student to return to their home country for the duration of the leave. In such cases, students will thereafter need to apply to the University for a new CAS number to apply for a new visa to resume their studies.

3.3.2 All requests for parental leave must be made in good time to permit time for approval of the request and to ensure travel home can be made following the report of the suspension to the UKVI.

3.3.3 In all cases, advice should be sought from Student Visa Services as early as possible (especially in the case of a pregnancy) to ensure compliance with the student visa (formally known as Tier 4) can be maintained.

3.4 Repayment of stipend payments

3.4.1 Should a student not return to their studies after the period of suspension, any stipend paid during that period will normally be recovered by the University. This requirement could be waived in exceptional circumstances, which would be approved on a case-by-case basis, by the Faculty PGR Director.

3.4.2 Students should return to studies at the University in a full or part-time capacity (at least 50% FTE), for at least 3 months following maternity or adoption leave. Should a student not return to their studies after the period of suspension, any stipend paid during that period will normally be recovered by the University. This requirement could be waived in

exceptional circumstances, which would be approved on a case-by-case basis, by the Faculty PGR Director. There is no minimum period of return required after paternity leave.

4 Maternity leave

4.1 Stipend payments during maternity leave

4.1.1 The following table outlines a students' entitlement to stipend payments during maternity leave which is dependent upon the source of funding:

Funding source	Leave Entitlement	Stipend Payments
UKRI-funded	52 weeks	26 weeks full stipend followed by 13 weeks at reduced rate and 13 weeks unpaid.
University-funded	52 weeks	26 weeks full stipend followed by 13 weeks at reduced rate and 13 weeks unpaid.
School- or Faculty-funded	52 weeks	26 weeks full stipend followed by 13 weeks at reduced rate and 13 weeks unpaid.
Externally-funded	52 weeks	Payments at the discretion of the funder
Self-funded	52 weeks	No payment

4.1.2 The reduced rate refers to an equivalent payment that is available to staff who are entitled to statutory maternity pay. The lower level of statutory maternity pay is set by the government each year (see https://www.gov.uk/maternity-pay-leave).

4.1.3 Students who are unsure about the source of their funding should contact their School Postgraduate Administrator for clarification.

4.1.4 Students who are registered at less than 100% will receive their standard pro-rata stipend payments (for the initial 26-week period as above) followed by 13 weeks of the reduced payment, with the appropriate pro-rata percentage applied.

4.1.5 Students do not have to take the full 52 weeks maternity leave and can opt for a shorter period of maternity leave; however, in line with guidance for staff, students should take at least two weeks leave following the birth of the child.

5 Adoption leave

5.1 Students who are planning to or who have become parents as a result of adoption are entitled to the same support and advice as other students who become parents during their studies, and the processes, leave allowances and stipend payments outlined in the table above and elsewhere in this policy apply equally.

5.2 It is acknowledged that the time-frame for adoption arrangements may not allow as much time for planning in comparison with a pregnant student, and where this is the case, the student and the member of staff will follow the principles and processes as far as they are able.

5.3 Where two students are jointly adopting, only one member of the couple can be considered as the primary caregiver, who will be entitled to be considered for maternity related absence. The other partner will be afforded the same entitlements as is outlined for partners entitled to paternity leave and shared parental leave.

5.4 All references to adoption and adoption leave include circumstances where individuals foster a child for adoption or are 'Parental Order' intended parents in a surrogacy arrangement.

6. Paternity leave

6.1 All research students registered at the University of Bristol are eligible for paternity leave, if they are:

- the partner of the person who will give birth **or**
- the partner of the primary adopter **or**
- the intended parent (if you are having a baby through surrogacy arrangement) **and**

- also have or expect to have responsibility for the child's upbringing

6.2 In the case of couples who are adopting a child or having a child through a surrogacy arrangement, adoption leave and pay are available to only one member of the couple. The other person can take paternity leave.

6.3 Paternity leave permits the individual to take up to 10 days leave on full stipend. Paternity leave must be taken in blocks of not less than one week. The funding end date should be extended to cover this period of absence.

7 Shared parental leave

7.1 Shared parental leave is a mechanism though which a parent may share their partner's entitlement to maternity or adoption leave, and is available to those who meet the following eligibility criteria:

(i)   They must share responsibility for the child with one of the following: their husband/wife/civil partner, or the child's other parent, or their partner (if they live with them) and they must provide a written statement from the other parent to confirm this;

(ii)   They must be taking the leave to look after the child;

(iii)   The other parent must have qualified for maternity leave or pay; or statutory adoption leave or pay or maternity allowance, or have qualified for the payment of a stipend during maternity leave under a policy such as this, (e.g. if she is also a research student);

(iv)   The other parent must have returned to work and must no longer be in receipt of maternity/adoption pay or allowance, or must have returned to their research/studies if they are also a research student, (the start and end dates of their leave must be provided);

(v)   The other parent must have some entitlement to maternity or adoption leave remaining;

(vi)   The terms and conditions of their grant must not specifically exclude the taking of such leave.

7.2 The number of weeks that may be taken as shared parental leave will depend on how many of the other parent's 52 weeks of maternity or adoption leave, they have remaining, but will in any event be capped at a maximum entitlement of 39 weeks. Shared parental

leave must be taken as a continuous block and may not end later than the child's first birthday.

7.3 The payments and leave entitlement reflect those made to students undertaking maternity leave. Therefore, qualifying students in receipt of UKRI funding, or funded by the University of Bristol Scholarship, faculty- or school-funding, will continue to be paid at full stipend for shared parental leave taken in the 26 weeks following the birth of the child, or at the reduced rate in the 13 weeks after week 26.

7.4 The student should apply for a suspension of study as outlined above. All applications should be submitted with a statement from the parent, in receipt of the paid maternity or adoption leave, confirming that the applicant for shared parent leave is their husband/wife/civil partner, or the child's other parent. In addition, the student must also provide the contact details of the employer of the individual in receipt of paid maternity or adoption leave (to check when their entitlement to maternity or adoption leave/pay ends). A form can be obtained from the student's Faculty Office for this purpose.

7.5 Where the individual in receipt of maternity of adoption leave is also a research student, please provide details of the relevant HE Institution.

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ANNEX 15

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Medical absence policy for funded research students

1. Introduction

1.1 The policy relates to the payment of stipends during periods of absence due to illness and applies to full-time and part-time research students who receive a maintenance stipend funded by the University of Bristol and/or by a UK Research Council.

1.2 Research students who are also members of staff of the University of Bristol should follow the appropriate HR Services policy for staff.

2. Student eligibility criteria for receiving stipend payments

2.1 Full-time and part-time research students who receive a maintenance stipend funded by the University of Bristol (including the UoB PG Scholarship and faculty- or school-funded students) and/or by a UK Research Council 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-month period.

2.2 Research students who receive an externally funded stipend from an external organisation or an external award administered through the University of Bristol must follow the regulations of the funder. If the funder does not provide additional money to fund periods of medical absence, the University is not liable to provide any payment.

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

2.4 Funding to cover periods of medical absence will not be provided to students during unfunded periods of study.

2.5 Part-time or part-funded students should expect to receive any payments to which they are entitled on a pro-rata basis.

3. Certification of medical absence

3.1 Research students who wish to continue to receive their stipend payment during a period of medical absence must provide the University with appropriate medical certification.

4. Suspension or extension of study due to medical absence

4.1 Information on suspensions, extensions and changes to mode of attendance is held in Section 6.4 of the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*

4.2 In cases of illness of a long duration, the school or faculty, in liaison with Disability Services, may wish to consider whether the student's withdrawal from the programme and possible reapplication at a future date would be a more appropriate measure.

5. Students with UKVI Student Visas (formally known as Tier 4)

5.1 In the case of students sponsored by the University under UKVI student visa (formally known as Tier 4), suspension of studies may require the University to withdraw sponsorship and for the student to return to their home country for the duration of the suspension. In such cases, students will thereafter need to apply to the University for a new CAS number to apply for a new visa to resume their studies.

5.2 All requests for suspension of studies must be made at the earliest opportunity to permit time for approval of the request and to ensure travel home can be made following the report of the suspension to the UKVI.

5.3 In all cases, advice should be sought from Student Visa Services as early as possible to ensure compliance with the student visa (formally known as Tier 4) can be maintained.

6. Returning to study after periods of medical absence

6.1 Students must keep their supervisor and appropriate school or faculty informed of any changes in their circumstances that may result in them returning to their studies earlier or later than originally stated. Students who have suspended their studies and want to return to their studies later than originally stated must apply for an extension to their suspension and provide a new medical certificate.

6.2 Occupational Health and/or the Disability Support Office should be consulted if additional support is required for students returning from long-term medical absence. The University's *Support to Study Policy* may also be consulted.

ANNEX 16

Supporting research students: A guide for supervisors

Introduction

Supervising a research student can be one of the most rewarding experiences in your academic career, intellectually, professionally and personally. It can also be daunting, particularly if you are new to supervising or if you encounter challenges outside your domain of expertise.

The following is meant as a practical guide for supervisors and as a signpost to University resources and procedures that support research students. It deals mainly with non-academic matters, but also touches on some academic matters of a general nature. It is intended to complement the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*, referred to in what follows as the Code of Practice. It is not meant as an alternative version thereof. Questions about formal regulations and procedures must always be referred to the Code of Practice, which takes primacy over this guidance.

There is one golden rule which summarises this guidance: If you're concerned about your student and are not sure what to do, ask for help.

Supervisors are not expected to sort everything out on their own. You will have colleagues in your school, faculty and in the University who will know how to help with issues you may not be familiar with, for example to do with accommodation, funding, physical and mental health, training, careers advice outside your discipline, etc.

As a supervisor, your primary responsibility is to provide academic mentoring to your student; this is the cornerstone of postgraduate research education. But another important responsibility is to serve as a point of contact between your student and the University. If your student is experiencing difficulties, then by alerting the relevant University staff at an early stage, you will help to ensure that they get the best and most timely help and support.

It is important to realise that all research students have, in addition to their main supervisor, at least one other supervisor. The role of each member of the supervisory team may vary depending on the project and on the circumstances of the particular student. Clarifying your role and involvement at the start of the period of study is essential and this should be achieved by means of an open discussion between the supervisory team and the student.

If such difficulties should arise, you should approach the School PGR Director, and, for non-academic matters, a member of staff with a pastoral or wellbeing role. Others who might be helpful are experienced colleagues, your Postgraduate Administrator, and your Head of School, Faculty Education Manager, and Faculty PGR Director.

The guidance below is organised broadly around the student lifecycle.

At the start

If you are supervising a student new to the University, keep an eye on how they are settling in. Arrange regular meetings. Ask, as appropriate, whether there are any problems with, for example, accommodation, funding arrangements, and balancing caring responsibilities and/or employment outside the University with their studies. Non-UK students may face particular challenges - adapting to a new country and culture and using English if it is not their first language. If you have any concerns, seek advice from your School PGR Director or from a member of staff with a pastoral or wellbeing role. Do also check that the student is joining in the academic life of their research community in the expected way. Are they attending the right lectures, group meetings, seminars?

At the start of a research degree and at appropriate times thereafter, you should discuss your student's expectations, as well as yours: what they hope to get from their research degree, what they expect of you as supervisor, and what you expect of them.

Supervisory meetings

"How frequently should I meet with my student?   Should notes be kept? Who is responsible for keeping notes?"

There is no fixed rule about the frequency of supervisory meetings - this will depend on many factors: the nature of the discipline, the stage of the project, individual preferences, etc. The Code of Practice (Section 5) specifies that formal meetings should normally take place at least monthly. It is good practice for notes to be kept of all meetings, and this is required for formal meetings. It is the student's responsibility to take the notes, but supervisors should ensure that this is happening.

"I'm going to be away for a time. What do I need to do about my students?"

If you will be out of contact for an extended period, you should let your School PGR Director know, so that temporary supervision can be put in place if needed – as per the Code of Practice (Section 5). If you will be away but in remote contact with your student, say by email or video conferencing, you should still let your School PGR Director know. It is important that your student knows whom to approach in the University if any problems should arise during your absence; this could be the second supervisor, for example. If you have concerns about your student's academic progress or wellbeing while you're away, you should tell your School PGR Director immediately.

Annual progress monitoring

As stated in the Code of Practice (Section 6), all research students are required to have their progress reviewed annually. As a supervisor, you should ensure you are able to advise your students on this process and ensure they are actively engaging with it in a timely manner. You will be expected to contribute to the process by commenting on your student's progress and highlighting any concerns or issues you have. In your comments, please make note of any issues that are outside the control of the student that may have a subsequent impact on the timely submission of the final dissertation.

Financial matters

As stated in the Code of Practice (Section 4), it is understood that research students may undertake paid work whilst doing their degree; for many students, this is necessary to support their studies. Students are also expected to work on their research at a rate commensurate with their registration status (i.e., full-time, half-time, etc.). As supervisor, you should discuss work commitments with your student. Your faculty or school may have guidance about how much work students should take on, as well as restrictions on the amount of paid University employment.

Research students are eligible to apply for a travel grant from the [Alumni Association](#).

Information about tuition fees and stipends as well as funding advice can be found on the [Student Funding Office webpages](#).

Personal and professional development

Personal and professional development for research students encompasses a range of training, from the discipline focused to the broadly aimed.

As a supervisor, you, alongside the postgraduate team in your school, have primary responsibility for your student's academic training. Given your disciplinary expertise, this should be relatively straightforward to undertake. Do remember to consider not only training geared specifically to their research project but their more general development as researchers. This can be achieved through participating in seminars, workshops, and conferences, presenting their work, both within the University and externally, as well as engaging with current literature and active scholars in their field. The annual progress review provides an opportunity for colleagues to suggest academic training that might benefit your student.

Training outside a student's academic discipline can also be very valuable. The University offers a wide spectrum of courses covering, for example: project management, IT skills, applied foreign languages, innovation and enterprise, teaching, public engagement, and mindfulness and well-being.
These courses are coordinated by the [Bristol Doctoral College](#) and are underpinned by the *Personal and Professional Development Policy for Research Students* (in Annex 12). This policy is in turn informed by the [Vitae Researcher Development](#)

[Framework](#), which is a national reference point in the planning, promotion and support of personal and professional development for researchers in higher education.

You are not expected to be an authority on the entirety of the University's personal and professional development offering. But through inviting your student to reflect on their own development, providing advice as you can, and encouraging them to take advantage of training opportunities, you will be giving invaluable support to the more general aspects of their postgraduate education.

Discipline-specific and broadly aimed training are complementary. Try to foster both.

Difficulties

Most supervisors know it is not uncommon for a research student to go through a difficult period in their studies, when they may lose confidence and/or motivation. Supervisors will have their own strategies for providing encouragement and support during such a period. Colleagues can often provide helpful advice.

If difficulties persist over an extended period, say more than a few of months, it is a good idea to inform your School PGR Director and to consider with them options for going forward.

In case of academic difficulties, do ask the student if they have suggestions for different ways of working, either on their own, with you, or perhaps with other researchers with whom they are engaged. If the student would benefit from additional structure and monitoring, the enhanced academic support process, described in the Code of Practice (Section 6), might be appropriate. In the most serious cases, it might be appropriate to discuss with your student the option of transferring to another degree (for example, from a PhD to a Masters by research), or withdrawing from the programme.

For non-academic problems, including personal matters and health problems, a suspension of studies might be indicated. Another option is for the student to change their mode of attendance, for example from full-time to half-time (but be aware that normally, students can change their mode of attendance only twice).

Maintaining confidentiality

Maintaining appropriate confidentiality is vital to the dignity of the student and securing trust in the student-supervisor relationship. Personal information confided in you by your student should not normally be shared without their permission, although there may be rare circumstances where this may be necessary. You should consult and adhere to the principles in the University's [Confidentiality Statement](#).

It is important to be aware of whether the student is telling you information suggestive of a disability. In such cases, you should encourage the student to disclose their

situation, emphasising the level of confidentiality followed by the Education and Student Experience Division and the potential additional support they may receive.

Unexpected absences and crises

If your student is unexpectedly absent, do try to establish that they are well and to ascertain the reason for their absence. If they do not respond to attempts to contact them, you should inform, without delay, your postgraduate team (including the School PGR Director and the local postgraduate administrator, as well as the Faculty Office). Likewise, if your student is acting erratically or if you have concerns about their wellbeing, you should contact your postgraduate team.

There is specialist wellbeing support available that can help students in crisis. Your postgraduate team will know how to engage with them so that intervention, if needed, can be arranged as quickly as possible.

Crises precipitated by physical or mental health problems may require a suspension of studies. In cases where a student is unwilling to suspend despite concerns about their health or wellbeing, the *Support to Study Policy* may be appropriate

Career Advice

As supervisor, you will be well placed to advise your student on pursuing an academic career, including how to present their work, networking, finding postdoctoral positions and pursuing longer-term career objectives.

It is a fact, though, that most research students do not become academics, but instead pursue careers in other arenas such as education, business, industry and government.

Many students will benefit from advice about careers in sectors other than academia. Depending on your background and experience, you may be well placed to provide such advice, or not. You can help your student by enabling them to access career advice outside your discipline. This could be through colleagues, the Careers Service, recruitment events and internships. Bear in mind that some students might be reluctant to share an interest in a career outside of academia, for fear that their supervisor might be disappointed, or that they might lose standing as a scholar. In discussions about careers, try to give your best advice without overreaching your area of expertise, and try to be open minded about choices that may lie outside it.

Plagiarism training

Your school or faculty may provide training to research students on how to avoid plagiarism, and students will have opportunities to put drafts of their written work through text comparison software before submitting their dissertation. As a supervisor, you should ensure that your students feel confident about what constitutes poor academic practice and plagiarism, and that they are making trial submissions to Turnitin. Don't just look at the percentage of matched material in the

Turnitin report. A dissertation is a long document, and a single page of contiguous text taken from another source without attribution might well be serious plagiarism, even though it constitutes just a small percentage of the whole.

Submission deadlines and extensions

Submission deadlines are strict. Make sure you know when your student's submission deadline is (there is variation across programmes), and regularly assess whether they are on track. In most cases, students should plan to submit at least six months before their submission deadline. Also, students in receipt of a stipend should usually aim to submit before their stipend finishes. If a student has funding through to their submission deadline, they should aim to have their dissertation ready to submit well in advance.

As explained in the Code of Practice (Section 6), extensions may be granted in exceptional circumstances, but an application must be made well in advance of the deadline. You should review your student's progress no later than four months before the deadline, if they haven't already submitted, and a request for an extension should be submitted shortly thereafter, if it is warranted.

It is the student who applies for an extension, not the supervisor. As supervisor, you will be asked for a statement of support and to sign off on a timetable for completion.

Not having enough time to do everything in a dissertation that one had hoped is not a good reason for an extension. Students should submit by the deadline unless circumstances outside their control prevent it.

The examination

As specified by the Code of Practice (Section 5), supervisors are expected to provide feedback on their students' written work, including their dissertation.

The detail into which supervisors review their students' dissertations varies across and within disciplines. Ultimately, the student is responsible for the content of their dissertation. A supervisor is expected to have assessed whether the work presented is of the appropriate standard, and to convey any concerns on this score to the student before the oral examination.

As specified in the Code of Practice (Section 9), prior to the examination, supervisors should not discuss the examination with the examiners, nor send them copies of the dissertation, either printed or electronic.

Remember that the examiners' recommendations are just that; the outcome of an examination is decided by the Research Degrees Examination Board (RDEB), which may not meet for several weeks or more after the oral examination. Once the RDEB has made its decision, you will receive a copy of the examiners' reports. It is good practice to review the reports; supervisors say this can be extremely useful.

If your student is required to make corrections to their dissertation, you are expected to be available to provide advice and support. Students are permitted to contact the internal examiner (or the Independent Chair if there is no internal examiner) just once following the oral examination, in order to seek clarifications about the requested changes. After this contact has occurred, as supervisor you may seek further informal guidance and clarification from the examiners on behalf of your student.

<div align="right">**ANNEX 17**</div>

Research degree dissertations and the impact of Covid-19 restrictions

1. *Introduction*

    1.1. Where possible, research students should adapt their research activities to address disruptions caused by Covid-19 restrictions, but it may be necessary to include a statement in their dissertation on the impact of disruptions on their work. Examiners will consider this statement in relation to the scope and volume of the research student's work but will always uphold the requirements for the award of research degrees (see Annex 7 of the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*). The quality threshold for the award remains unchanged and there must be no compromise in the integrity of the examination or the award.

    1.2. This policy covers all research students who were registered during any period where Covid-19 restrictions were in place.

    1.3. Adjustments to research projects are a common part of study, but the pandemic has in many cases created significant ongoing changed circumstances. Research students will reflect on the impact of the pandemic on the design and conduct of their research, including through discussions that form part of the annual progress review process. Any redesigns to the project will form part of the narrative of the work and should be included in the research design section of the dissertation. Suspensions and extensions may also be appropriate ways of mitigating the impact of the pandemic but will not always be sufficient on their own. Even where redesigned research activities are discussed in the dissertation and/or where suspensions or extensions have been granted, research students may wish to provide a statement to their examiners on how the impact of Covid-19 restrictions has changed their project.

    1.4. The focus of the policy is on assessment and the inclusion of a statement in a dissertation submitted or resubmitted for examination. Faculties and Schools may have discipline-specific advice for students in place that aligns with, and complements, this policy.

2. *The decision to include a Covid-19 statement*

    2.1. Any research student who has had their research activities curtailed by Covid-19 restrictions may include a Covid-19 statement in their dissertation in the format set out below. A statement is not compulsory and should only be included where a research student wishes to highlight the impact of the pandemic and the steps taken to adjust their research activities.

    2.2. Research students should discuss the inclusion of a Covid-19 statement in their dissertation with their supervisors, but the decision to include the statement ultimately rests with the student.

3. *Covid-19 statement format*

   3.1. The Covid-19 statement must be included in the dissertation between the abstract and the author's declaration – see Annex 4 of the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*. The statement is only required for the examination copy and should be removed when the final copy is deposited with the Library.

   3.2. The statement, which must not exceed 800 words, will form a summary of any planned research activities disrupted by Covid-19 restrictions and the extent to which it was possible to adapt the work in those changed circumstances. The following may be included:

      3.2.1. Details of any planned research activities curtailed by the pandemic because of, for example, lack of access to facilities, libraries, archives, research participants, fieldwork, etc. Information on any curtailed training should be included only insofar as it relates to the impact on research activities and on the dissertation.

      3.2.2. An acknowledgement of the anticipated contribution and value to the dissertation if those research activities had not been curtailed and what was possible to include in the dissertation in the circumstances, including where alternative choices were made to adapt the work and whether there are any weaknesses that could not be overcome.

      3.2.3. Any other relevant factors on the impact of Covid-19 on research activities and on the contents of the dissertation.

      3.2.4. Details of any research activities required by the examiners as part of a resubmission that were curtailed by the pandemic may be included in a new or revised Covid-19 statement in the resubmitted dissertation.

   3.3. Issues arising from illness, disability, bereavement, or any exceptional circumstances not related to disruptions to research activities caused by the pandemic must not be included, as there are standard mechanisms to address those issues.

4. *Guidance for examiners on Covid-19 statements*

   4.1. Examiners must maintain academic standards in relation to the criteria for awards as set out in Annex 7 of the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*. Where a Covid-19 statement is included in a dissertation there can be some flexibility in the consideration of the scope and volume of the work produced, but not on its quality or on the thresholds for the award.

   4.2. As set out in Annex 7, the dissertation must embody the results of research that '*may reasonably be expected of a capable and diligent student in the period of study specified in the regulations for the degree*.' The examiners' consideration of the scope and volume of the work produced in the dissertation may take into account where curtailed research activities have reduced what was possible in the period

allowed. The dissertation must however still satisfy the standards required for the award.

4.3. Examiners must discount any information in a Covid-19 statement that does not relate to disruptions to research activities caused by the pandemic and to the content of the dissertation.

4.4. The recommendation from examiners is a matter of academic judgement and therefore it is their decision on what allowance to give to any limitations in the volume and scope of the dissertation due to the impact of Covid-19. Examiners must consider closely the result of pandemic-related disruptions in the production of the dissertation and decide whether in their academic judgement the dissertation meets the criteria for the award of the research degree.

4.5. The examiners' joint final report must incorporate an overview of their consideration of a Covid-19 statement and their determination of the impact on the scope and volume of the dissertation within the context of maintaining the academic standards required for the award.

4.6. Any corrections, or a resubmission, required by the examiners must take into account any allowance made by them on the limitations in volume and scope of the dissertation due to the pandemic. Examiners must consider what corrections are necessary to meet the criteria for the award and must not require additional work aimed only at addressing where research activities have been curtailed by Covid-19 restrictions.

ANNEX 18

Policy on postgraduate research students who teach

1. *Introduction*

    1.1. The University of Bristol recognises the importance and values the contribution of Postgraduate Research (PGR) students in the teaching and assessment of students. Teaching also provides valuable experience for PGRs in many career pathways. Given this, the University encourages its PGRs to apply to suitable teaching activities, unless it impedes the successful completion of their research degree.

    1.2. The primary responsibility for the details laid out in this policy, as well as overall line-management of a School's PGRs who teach, lies with the respective School Education Directors or equivalent.

    1.3. PGRs must be contracted for teaching duties and paid the rate agreed within that contract. The contract must specify the rate of pay, number of contact hours, preparation time, assessment time, and other related duties. The contract must be agreed with the School Manager before the PGR takes up their teaching duties.

    1.4. PGRs who teach will normally only be involved in the teaching and assessment of undergraduate students (exceptions are covered in 3.4 below).

2. *Opportunities to Teach*

    2.1. All PGRs should be made aware of all teaching opportunities available to them and the process for application, although such opportunities to teach will vary across Schools, dependent upon the subject, its preferred models of delivery, and student recruitment.

    2.2. The process and arrangements for selecting PGRs to be involved in the teaching process should be fair and transparent and is normally the responsibility of the School Manager or Student Administration Manager. Selection will be based on teaching requirements, the PGRs' communication skills and knowledge of the subject, and any other relevant experience.

    2.3. Unless there is a contractual agreement, such as a Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) scholarship, PGRs cannot be compelled and should not be pressured to take on teaching duties. However, the University strongly encourages PGRs to teach where appropriate for their personal and professional development.

    2.4. Every PGR who teaches must have a teaching mentor (see 5.3 below).

    2.5. Teaching must not impede the successful completion of the PGR's own research degree and must not contravene any relevant funding conditions or UK immigration

conditions where applicable.[5] PGRs should discuss their planned or agreed teaching activities with their research supervisor/s and the School Manager or other relevant role should arrange for the supervisor/s to be notified of contracted teaching and assigned teaching mentors.

2.6. Where processes regarding a PGR's fitness to study, unsatisfactory progress, or enhanced academic support have been triggered, the teaching load will have to be reviewed in a meeting including the School Education Director, the School PGR Director (and, if relevant, the appropriate DTE Director), the teaching mentor and the research supervisor/s.

2.7. Any contract or offer of teaching will be subject to the PGR satisfying the requirements of a Right to Work check (performed by HR) and any additional UK immigration conditions relating to the work.

3. *Activities and Responsibilities*

3.1. A PGR may, as appropriate, be employed to deliver or contribute to the following teaching activities[6]:
   3.1.1. Seminars, tutorials and workshops;
   3.1.2. Laboratory and other practical classes, including projects;
   3.1.3. Field trips;
   3.1.4. Occasional lecturing (see 3.3); and
   3.1.5. Assessment and marking.

3.2. In line with recommendations from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), unless the PGR holds a GTA post, their teaching activities should not normally exceed an average of 6 hours per week across the calendar year (including all preparation, assessment and marking), taking into account local circumstances (unit structure, intensive teaching, etc.), visa requirements and any particular funder guidance.

3.3. PGRs should not normally deliver lectures unless they are invited to provide a (paid) lecture within their research specialism.

3.4. A PGR should not normally be involved in teaching at Masters level, unless they have relevant specialist knowledge and relevant experience, and the School Education Director has approved their involvement.

3.5. It is the individual responsibility of PGRs to ensure they are aware of, and comply with, any working conditions of their UK immigration permission.

4. *Pastoral care and student wellbeing*

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[5] Such as the number of weekly working hours permitted on a student visa (formally known as Tier 4). For information on student visas and working conditions please see http://www.bristol.ac.uk/directory/visas/work-visas/ or contact the Student Visa Advisers.
[6] Please see the role descriptors for further information: http://www.bristol.ac.uk/hr/hpt/hpt-descriptors-summary.html

4.1. PGRs who teach might find themselves to be a first point of call for students who are experiencing personal, wellbeing or academic difficulties. PGRs who teach are not expected to provide pastoral care for their students. However, they need to be aware of the University´s system of pastoral care provision and need to know how to direct students to appropriate members of staff if the need arises (see 4.2 and 5.1 below).

4.2. PGRs who teach will, in the normal run of their duties, encounter pastoral issues and must be trained accordingly. They must be paid to undertake the mandatory pastoral care training given to permanent members of staff (see the relevant e-learning package developed by the Charlie Waller Memorial Trust). PGRs who teach must also be made aware of the support provided by the University for students and be included in relevant School and Department processes as appropriate. Schools must provide guidance on how to respond to situations and orientation on the appropriate local administrative processes.

4.3. Schools should also provide local inductions to handling personal information, which is subject to the Data Protection Act and should be treated as confidential (more information of the Data Protection act is available here). Personal information shared by a student must not be disclosed to any third party (including parents and guardians) without the express permission of the student. Sensitive data may be disclosed in an emergency situation when it is in the vital interests of the student. In the first instance, the Senior Tutor of the School should be consulted. Advice on this can also be obtained from the Secretary's Office or, if out of hours, from Security Services.

4.4 The University recognises teaching and its related duties can be both demanding and rewarding. PGRs who teach should be made aware by the School that they have access to University support resources available to permanent staff. Apart from these services, PGRs who teach who experience problems are encouraged to talk to their unit director, line managers or supervisors as a first step. Regular meetings with the unit director should also be used to address problems early on.

5. *Training and Support*

5.1. All PGRs who teach must receive appropriate training. This must include:

5.1.1. An initial discipline-specific induction, which must be provided by the School before the PGR undertakes any teaching activity, including, where relevant and applicable, more detailed guidance on subjects such as marking, teaching preparation and expectations, practicalities around office hours and student contact, etc.;

5.1.2. At least one of the training courses for postgraduate teachers provided by the Bristol Institute for Learning and Teaching. The appropriate course will depend on the PGR's previous teaching experience and must be taken within six months of starting to teach.

5.1.3. Mandatory pastoral care training mentioned in 4.2.

5.2. PGRs who teach must be paid for the mandatory training they undertake.

5.3. Each PGR's teaching (including any assessment) must be mentored and monitored by a named member of academic staff (typically the programme or unit director, or the co-teacher on the unit, depending upon local circumstances, or, where appropriate, the supervisor). The mentor is responsible for providing the PGR with feedback on their teaching through regular monitoring/observation and providing guidance on assessment. They or a person they nominate conduct scheduled teaching observations at least once a teaching block and decide whether the PGR needs any additional training or support. They should meet the PGR regularly and at least once a teaching block.

5.4. A PGR's experience of teaching, and any related skills development, must also be discussed with their supervisor/s as part of the formal review of their development and progress, in line with the requirements for Annual Progress Review as set out in the Section 6 of the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*.

5.5. Wherever appropriate, topics related to PGRs who teach should be fed into or otherwise represented at all levels of the PGR representation structure as laid out in the Section 8 of the Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes.

5.6. Further information and support for PGRs who teach as teaching assistants and demonstrators is available on the HR webpages.

6. *Quality Assurance*

6.1. A PGR should not be named as Unit Director when contributing to a unit, nor should they be members of the Board of Examiners, nor be given any responsibility for the management of programmes, unless special dispensation is provided by the Faculty Education Director.

6.2. Schools must ensure that the extent of the involvement of PGRs in the delivery of a taught programme is managed and reviewed with the overall learning experience of students in mind. The quality of this experience will be central to decision making about the type, content and amount of teaching undertaken by PGRs. The responsibility for this process lies with the School Education Director.

6.3. As part of standard University quality assurance processes, the School (through the programme or unit directors and in collaboration with the respective teaching mentors) must evaluate the performance of PGRs who teach (during and at the end of the teaching activity and including any assessment) in order to ensure that students receive teaching of the appropriate quality. Such evaluations must take account of the taught students' feedback as well as any reports resulting from staff observation of the teaching.

6.4. The official grievance procedure for PGRs who teach is the same as for other staff. However, in the first instance issues regarding teaching should be discussed with the teaching mentor or be escalated up to the School Education Director. Those issues impacting on the PGR's research should be discussed with their supervisor/s or escalated to the School PGR Director and, if relevant, the appropriate DTE Director.

Good practice guidance for PGR students who teach

Introduction

The involvement of PGRs in the teaching process has mutual benefits for students and staff:

- Undergraduates and other taught students benefit from interacting with individuals who are often closer to their experience of being a student than academic staff;

- the PGR gains valuable transferable skills to benefit their career development by participating in teaching and the wider activities of their school;

- staff are supported in providing research-rich teaching.

The following suggestions and notes aim to maximise these benefits.

- It is deemed good practice for PGRs to begin their teaching experience by taking part in a co- taught or team-taught unit.

- If possible, experienced PGRs who teach should be offered progressive levels of teaching and be paid at the level appropriate for the relevant role descriptor.

- Where possible, the University should provide space and IT equipment to ensure confidentiality of student work.

- Among these provisions are the Staff Counselling Services, the employee assistance programme which is available 24/7, as well as the University Occupational Health Service. PGRs who teach should also be included in staff wellbeing offers on School levels such as awaydays, break-out sessions or wellbeing walks.

Teaching observation

The Bristol Institute for Learning and Teaching provides guidance and a form for the observation of teaching.

Failure to complete assessment for research degrees

1. In exceptional circumstances, the Research Degrees Examination Board may approve a research degree award for a candidate, where:

   a) the candidate is prevented by illness or other substantial cause from completing their dissertation and/or examination,
   b) the academic award cannot be made under the University's normal academic regulations,
   c) there is no prospect in the foreseeable future of the candidate being able to fulfil the requirements of the award, and
   d) there is sufficient evidence of the candidate's ability at the appropriate level for the award.

Aegrotat awards

2. Aegrotat awards are applicable for candidates who are unable to complete their programme of study and who have produced insufficient material for assessment due to illness or other substantial cause. These candidates do not qualify for a standard award, but an aegrotat award may be granted if in the judgement of the Research Degrees Examination Board the candidate would have gained an award if circumstances had permitted.

3. The Research Degrees Examination Board may decide to approve an aegrotat award where:

   a) the candidate has been prevented by illness or other substantial cause from completing their programme of study and from producing sufficient material for assessment;
   b) the candidate is unable to complete an examination at a later date, including if this is deemed to be undesirable or impracticable by the Research Degrees Examination Board;
   c) the candidate has demonstrated that they are worthy of an aegrotat award as confirmed through, for example, a supporting statement from their supervisors; and
   d) the candidate (or in the case of posthumous awards, their next of kin) agrees to an aegrotat award.

Standard research degree awards

4. Standard research degree awards are applicable for candidates who are unable to complete their programme of study due to illness or other substantial cause but who have produced sufficient material for assessment. These candidates will qualify for an appropriate standard award if the Research Degrees Examination Board approves a recommendation from an external examiner based on the available research work completed by the candidate.

5. The initial request for consideration of a standard award in these circumstances would normally be submitted to the Research Degrees Examination Board for consideration by the relevant Faculty PGR Director. The candidate (or in the case of posthumous awards, their next of kin) must agree to request. If the request is accepted, the Research Degrees

Examination Board will appoint an external examiner to assess the available research work and to make a recommendation on the award. There will not be an oral examination.

5. The Research Degrees Examination Board may approve an award (at either doctoral or master's level as deemed appropriate), notwithstanding that the research degree has not been completed, on the recommendation of an external examiner that the following requirements have been met:

   a) enough of the research project must have been completed to allow a proper assessment of the scope of the dissertation;
   b) the standard of the research work completed must be that normally required for the award of the degree in question, and must demonstrate the candidate's grasp of the subject; and
   c) the written material available (such as draft chapters, published work, work prepared for publication, presentations to conferences, progress reports by the candidate) must demonstrate the candidate's ability to write a dissertation at the required standard.

ANNEX 20

Regulations for Higher Doctorates

Definition

1. Higher doctorates are a higher tier of research doctorates which may be awarded:

   a) On the basis of a formally submitted substantial body of published original research of a very high standard, or

   b) on an honorary basis (honoris causa i.e. "for the sake of the honour") when a university wishes to recognise formally an individual's achievements and contributions to a particular field.

2. The regulations set out below relate to Higher Doctorates by Published Work.

Higher Doctorates by Published Work

Admission Requirements

3. Candidature for the degrees of Doctor of Engineering (DEng), Doctor of Letters (DLitt), Doctor of Music (DMus), Doctor of Science (DSc) and Doctor of Laws (LLD) shall be open to:

   a) a graduate of the University of Bristol, or

   b) a graduate of any other degree-awarding body, who is a member of staff of the University of Bristol with a contract of employment and who has been employed by the University for at least three continuous three years.

Award of the degree

4. The degree will be awarded following:

   a) a submission of original published work of distinction on any subject falling within the academic scope of the relevant faculty, and

   b) the judgment of the work as being of sufficient merit to entitle the candidate to the degree, the candidate having established their reputation as an authority in their subject in the opinion of the appointed examiners.

Eligibility

5. To be eligible, the candidate's published work must meet the following criteria:

   a) The published work must represent a very significant contribution to knowledge. The work may range across different topics, but it should normally relate in a coherent way to a field of knowledge. The treatment of those topics should be substantial.

b) Greater weight will be attached to a few substantial publications than to a larger number of brief items. It will not normally be possible to form an adequate judgment of the candidate's eligibility unless the amount of work submitted is considerable.

c) Work will normally be regarded as published if it is listed in ordinary catalogues of published works and is obtainable, at or before the submission, by members of the public. The submission may include material that is accepted for publication but not yet published.

d) The work must not have been previously submitted for a Higher Doctorate.

e) Where publications have already been submitted for a degree other than a Higher Doctorate, the candidate must state how those publications support the present candidature.

Application

6. The final decision on whether to permit a candidate to register for a Higher Doctorate by Published Work rests with the relevant Faculty PGR Director, who must ensure that the candidate has published enough appropriate material to have a reasonable chance of being awarded the Higher Doctorate. The Faculty PGR Director will inform the Head of School of the decision.

7. An application will consist of:

a) a synopsis of approximately 500 words outlining the significance of the submitted work,

b) a provisional list of publications the candidate intends to submit, and

c) a *curriculum vitae,* including details of the candidate's employment at the University of Bristol where relevant.

Registration

8. If approved, the candidate will be required to pay the relevant registration and submission fee (the fee is set at the same level as the fee for the PhD by Published Work) before being registered with the appropriate faculty.

9. The Head of School will appoint an advisor with knowledge of the candidate's field of work to provide support and guidance on how to present the material, and to ensure suitable examiners are selected.

Submission

10. Candidature for a Higher Doctor is normally completed within one year and should result in the formal submission within one year of the initial registration.

11. Candidates must electronically submit the following to the PGR exams team (pgr-exams@bristol.ac.uk).

a) The published work, indicating key publications, or for DMus, a folio of between five and seven compositions, comprising scores, primary documentation, electronic or recorded material (see also the section below on further guidance on DMus).

b) An analytical account of no fewer than 2,000 – 3,000 words linking the published work and explaining its significance and coherence, including:
  (i)   a synopsis of the candidate's record of research and scholarship,
  (ii)   an outline of research interests and achievements through reference to specific publications, and
  (iii) evidence that the publications have been widely noted in the national and international academic community as making original or significant contributions to developments in the field.

c) A signed statement indicating the level of contribution to each publication and role of the candidate as sole author, senior author, or co-author.

d) A numbered list of publications indicating books and monographs, chapters in books, edited works, papers in refereed journals, refereed conference proceedings and other work.

e) A *curriculum vitae*, including full name, present professional position, higher education and qualifications, lectures given in national and international conferences, invited seminars, invited overseas visits and lectures, awards, prizes, bursaries, composer-in-residence posts (for DMus), honours and research-related activities including membership of committees and editorships.

f) Any appropriate supplementary data.

Assessment

12. Three examiners (normally one internal and two external) must be proposed by the advisor in consultation with the candidate prior to submission. An Appointment of Research Degree Examiners form must be completed and approved by the School PGR Director and the Faculty PGR Director. The approved form must be sent to the PGR exams team (pgr-exams@bristol.ac.uk), who will circulate the submission to the appointed examiners.

13. The assessment does not involve an oral examination. The examiners are required to make individual assessments of the submission and to produce independent reports to the Research Degrees Examination Board (via pgr-exams@bristol.ac.uk). Each report (which typically should be one or two pages of A4) should make a clear recommendation on whether the degree should be awarded, and the accompanying rationale must be sufficiently comprehensive and detailed to enable the Board to assess the scope and significance of the work submitted.

Outcome

14. Once all three reports have been received by the PGR exams team, the reports will be considered at the next available Research Degrees Examination Board. The Board will either pass or fail the candidate. No resubmission is permitted.

Copy in the University Library

15. A definitive copy of each set of publications or compositions successfully presented for the degree shall be deposited with the University Library.

Further guidance on a DMus submission

16. A DMus folio should demonstrate original and significant thinking in musical terms, and a high level of technical command in a variety of mediums. Where the composer is predominantly concerned with acoustic instrumental music, there should be evidence of extended structures such as symphonic work and carefully wrought music such as that associated with the string quartet medium, amongst contrasting work. Where the composer has concentrated on the development of other areas, such as mixed media, studio, ethnic or community approaches, the work should be of comparable quality in its field.

17. The folio should comprise:

    a) a list of works (and recordings) submitted;

    b) scores, primary documentation, electronic or recorded material;

    c) recordings of performances.