



ARCHIVE

Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Degrees

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1. Introduction

Our University awards the following research degrees; Master of Research (MRes) achieved by research; Master of Philosophy (MPhil); Doctor of Philosophy (PhD); Master of Philosophy (MPhil) by Publication; Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) by Publication; named professional doctorates; Higher Doctorates; and PhD (Europe). The standards and learning outcomes of the awards are detailed in Part 1 of the Manual of General Regulations.

This Code sets out the policies of the University of East London (UEL) on required practice in all matters concerning postgraduate research degree programmes and activity. All postgraduate research students and their supervisors should be familiar with this Code.

This Code should be read in conjunction with Part 9 of the Manual of General Regulations, which relates to postgraduate research degrees; where there is variance, the standards and expectations set out in Part 9 will take precedence.

For the purposes of this Code, a 'student' is any individual registered for a postgraduate research degree programme, including but not limited to MPhil, PhD, PhD by Publication, MRes and professional doctorates, on a full-time or part-time basis. Any reference within this Code to individual programmes is made only when the information is relevant solely to that award.

2. Purpose of this Code

The purpose of this Code is to provide a framework for the successful organisation and implementation of good practice in all matters relating to postgraduate research degrees at our University. It aims to ensure that all students are effectively supported and supervised, so that the full scope and potential of their research is realised; that their thesis is submitted within the regulatory periods set out in Part 9 of the Manual of General Regulations; and that they complete their programme of study with a suitable and sufficient portfolio of research and employment-related skills and competencies.

The relevant Dean of School will be responsible for ensuring that staff and students involved with postgraduate research degree activity adhere to the requirements in this Code and Part 9 of the Manual of General Regulations.

3. Admission to a postgraduate research degree

Academic Schools will ensure that their admission procedures involve the judgment of at least two members of staff, at least one of whom is employed in an academic capacity at our University, both of whom will have received staff development in the selection and admission of postgraduate research degree students.

Academic Schools will ensure adherence to our University's policies and processes in assessing whether international applicants have or can acquire the appropriate level of English language proficiency. Further guidance on this may

be sought from the International Office.

Academic Schools will ensure they have suitable processes that include mechanisms for assessing student qualifications and preparedness reflecting professional or other work experience in cases where admissions decisions are based on experiential or prior- certified credit.

Academic Schools will ensure that the research topic is viable, that the research environment is suitable and that sufficient resources are available to ensure the programme is completed within the periods stipulated in the Part 9 of the Manual of General Regulations.

Academic Schools will ensure that applicants with disabilities are not disadvantaged or debarred by the criteria and procedures used for selecting students and that appropriate support is offered and available at interview. Where further guidance is required, academic staff may refer to the Disability and Dyslexia Access Centre (DDAC).

Academic Schools will ensure that all applicants are made aware of the requirement to complete the programme within the regulatory period stipulated in the University's regulations; the requirements for successful annual progression; and the procedures for monitoring of progress at interview.

Academic Schools are responsible for ensuring appropriate supervisory arrangements that adequately reflect the nature of the work concerned and the student's needs. Each applicant will be allocated indicative supervisors as part of the admissions process.

The School Research Degrees Leader has principal responsibility for ensuring that academic staff nominated as indicative supervisors are trained and informed about the processes of supervision and progression. Any member of staff who acts in a supervisory capacity for a student must have undertaken the relevant supervisory training.

Academic Schools will ensure that their admissions processes demonstrate equality of opportunity for all candidates.

4. Offers of admission

Offers of admission will be made by the Admissions Office or the International Office as appropriate, once the completed application form has been received from the School. Two independent references must be received for all applications.

The offer of admission from the Admissions Office or the International Office will include details of the programme of study, the normal duration of study, and expected total fees, including any bench fees; indicative supervisory arrangements; references to the institutional regulations, Code of Practice for

Research, induction arrangements, handbook and other relevant information for a research degree programme.

There are two intake points for postgraduate research degrees, one in September and the other in February. Prospective students may only start their programme within the enrolment periods indicated by our University.

5. Academic Schools

All students will be enrolled and subsequently registered in one of our University's academic Schools. Each School will provide appropriate documentation detailing local requirements and expectations, where necessary, and details of discipline specific research skills training. In the case of professional doctorates, a programme handbook will be provided with full details of the assessment requirements and programme structure.

Students are full members of the research community in their School. Attending as many research events and conferences as possible will provide important networking and opportunities in addition to updating subject area knowledge.

School oversight of postgraduate research degree matters rests with School Research Degrees Sub-committee under the leadership of the School's Research Degrees Leader.

School Research Degrees Sub-Committee will meet regularly throughout the academic year, to consider applications submitted by students.

The Director of Studies will provide the student with advice about the preparation and submission of forms to register their research, to transfer their registration from MPhil to PhD, where necessary, and for the final *viva voce* oral examination arrangements to be approved. Additionally, any changes to the registered degree including changes to approved supervision arrangements or requests to suspend enrolment or registration will be submitted by the Director of Studies and student to School Research Degrees Sub-Committee and Research Degrees Subcommittee.

6. Postgraduate research students

Students should become familiar with Part 9 of the Manual of General Regulations and the provisions of this Code at an early stage in their programme.

Schools, services and staff will communicate with students via their UEL email account and it is the responsibility of the student to check it at regular intervals and respond as appropriate.

The research and resulting thesis are the work of the student and it is the expectation of our University that they take full and active responsibility for this.

As part of their programme students are expected to engage with the research and employability-related skills development opportunities offered at UEL. Having received advice and guidance from their Director of Studies and supervisory team, students have responsibility for determining the appropriate point of submission for their thesis, within the regulatory periods stipulated in Part 9 of the Manual of General Regulations. Normally the student and Director of Studies will agree on the appropriate date for submission but our regulations allow the student to submit their thesis without agreement of their supervisors once they have passed the minimum period of registration.

If the proposed research is part of a broader programme of work involving a group of investigators, particularly where this predates the registration of the postgraduate research programme, the student must provide an explicit statement, in conjunction with their Director of Studies, as part of their registration. This must make clear the respective role of the student in relation to the broader programme, including, details of the Principal Investigator (PI) and any other researchers, and the relevant aspects of work reported in the thesis. The statement must make clear the student's role in designing the study, developing data collection instruments or techniques, collecting and analysing primary data and generating conclusions based on this analysis. Any other researchers involved in the research must be named and their contributions specified. In addition, the Director of Studies and student should also consult our University's policies on plagiarism and academic integrity.

All postgraduate research students are required to work with their Director of Studies and supervisory team on an agreed annual Postgraduate Research Skills Development Plan. Students are required to have regular contact with their Director of Studies and supervisory team to discuss a programme of practical and written work and training toward their Postgraduate Research Skills Development Plan. Students must give serious consideration to any guidance provided by their Director of Studies and supervisory team and should address any concerns expressed about their academic progress. Our University's requirements around research skills development are the responsibility of the Graduate School.

All students are encouraged to participate in research seminar programmes organised by their School and to present their work to peers. This will help students become part of our research community and help them develop their research skills.

All postgraduate research students should acknowledge the University and their supervisory team in any public output which results from their research degree work.

In matters relating to intellectual property rights and ownership, postgraduate research students should make contact with the UEL Head of Research and Development Support (Martin Longstaff: m.longstaff@uel.ac.uk) for help and guidance.

7. Quality assurance for postgraduate research degrees

Academic Board has ultimate responsibility for assuring and enhancing the quality of our University's research degree provision. This is devolved to Quality and Standards Committee (QSC) which in turn devolves the institutional responsibility to Research Degrees Subcommittee. At the level of the academic Schools Research Degrees Sub-Committee, chaired by the School Research Degrees Leader, manage the day-to-day responsibilities

School Research Degrees Sub-Committee has responsibility for:

- ensuring that research students and supervisors receive adequate advice and guidance in the preparation of all documentation they may be required to complete;
- receiving and considering any proposal or request from a student or supervisor concerning the various stages of our postgraduate research degree programmes and to give, or withhold, an unconditional recommendation for approval to Research Degrees Subcommittee;
- managing the process of annual student review and to receive individual review reports and any associated action plans;
- receiving and approving the annual report on postgraduate research degree activity within the School, drafted by the Research Degrees Leader;
- advising the Dean of School and School Board on any matters concerning postgraduate research degree programmes in the School;
- receiving and considering the minutes and recommendations of designated sub- groups;
- submitting to Research Degrees Subcommittee recommendations for approval and confirmed minutes of School Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

Research Degrees Subcommittee has responsibility for;

- ensuring the interests of research degree candidates are protected and that the standards of awards are maintained across our University;
- receiving, on behalf of QSC recommendations from School Research Degrees Sub-Committees regarding postgraduate research students and considering them for approval;
- on behalf of QSC receiving and considering for approval applications and requests from students that come direct to Research Degrees Subcommittee;
- receiving the confirmed minutes of each School Research Degrees Sub-Committee meeting;
- receiving and considering reports and data to monitor and evaluate the success of our research degree programmes;
- ensuring that our research degree regulations and associated procedures both recognise and promote relevant standards, expectations and codes of external agencies, such as the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA);
- advising QSC on policy, strategy and management concerning our postgraduate research degree programmes and reporting on the robustness and effectiveness of procedures at School Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

8. Enrolment

Upon successful enrolment, students are entitled to the use of all standard facilities at our University and supervision throughout the course of the research degree. All students are required to complete the enrolment process. Schools and HE providers in partnership with our University may not admit a student on to a postgraduate research degree programme prior to payment of relevant fees and confirmation of enrolment by issue of a student card. Enrolment must be completed at the beginning of each academic year or semester of attendance.

First year students are expected to meet with their indicative supervisors as soon as possible after enrolment to clarify their research topic, identify skill training needs, agree a preliminary schedule and formulate a research proposal in preparation for registration.

9. Research environment

Any offer of admission to a programme of postgraduate research with our University should only be made where students can be supported by an appropriate research environment. This may include:

- opportunities to work with researchers in a relevant and cognate field;
- access to appropriate academic and administrative staff who are able to advise and support the student during their research degree;
- supervisory support that actively encourages the development and successful completion of the chosen programme of research;
- suitable and sufficient guidance on our University's standards around research ethics, research integrity, plagiarism and intellectual property;
- opportunities to develop relevant research and employment-related skills and competencies through access to suitable training opportunities;
- access to appropriate research facilities and resources, including library and computer facilities, laboratories and desk space.

Schools consider these aspects when making an offer of a place.

It is the responsibility of the relevant School to ensure students have adequate access to appropriate academic resources and facilities while not in attendance at our University, such as when registered as 'split-site' or conducting overseas fieldwork. Schools are required to exercise academic judgment in deciding what constitutes adequate access and what are appropriate academic resources and facilities for the research; taking into account the discipline and research topic of the student.

Our University's *'Policy on split-site arrangements for postgraduate research students domiciled outside of the UK'* details the various standards and requirements for students enrolled in this mode. All applications for admission on a 'split-site' basis must be reviewed by School Research Degrees Sub-Committee.

10. Teaching Opportunities

Students may be offered teaching duties within an academic School. Although this is a valuable source of income and experience it is not advisable to over-extend any commitments to teaching if the student wishes to complete the research degree within the agreed timescale.

'Teaching duties' should be regarded as any teaching commitments of an on-going nature across a semester or academic year. A 'one-off' guest lecture would not count as teaching duties in this context.

Our University is committed to supporting students in carrying out teaching activity. As a consequence, if a student is asked to undertake teaching duty at UEL, and has less than two years experience of teaching in Higher Education, they will be required to attend the Teaching Skills for PGR Students workshop prior to undertaking any teaching.

As an alternative, students may enrol on the Lecturer's Development Programme although, as the name suggests, this is primarily orientated toward newly appointed lecturers.

Additionally, students may also enrol for the Post-Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education, but this is a major commitment and will almost certainly impact on the student's ability to pursue their research.

In line with the guidance of the UK Research Councils, such work may be undertaken provided that:

- the total demand on time, including contact time and a reasonable allowance for preparation and marking, does not exceed 180 hours for full-time and 90 hours for part-time students in any one academic year;
- the total demand on time does not exceed six hours in any week for full-time and three hours for part-time;
- the work is compatible with and relevant to the student's programme of doctoral study;
- the Director of Studies is aware of the work being undertaken.

It is the expectation of our University that full-time students devote at least thirty-five hours a week to their research. The requirement for part-time students is not specified but should be roughly pro-rata that for full-time.

11. Students transferring from/to another HE provider

Where a student transfers from another Higher Education Institution (HEI) to UEL School Research Degrees Sub-Committee must consider the application before the offer is made and decide - in addition to standard admissions requirements - if the grounds for transfer are acceptable; if the applicant transferred their registration from MPhil to PhD at the previous HEI; how much of the previous period of registration will be allowed against their UEL registration period; and the

bona fide status of the previous HEI provider. As with any student, a research skills needs analysis will be undertaken annually.

Where the student's research project involves research on human beings or animals the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) should be consulted before any work is transferred to UEL. In particular, UREC will need to be reassured that appropriate ethical approval by a duly constituted and appropriate Ethics committee was obtained before the research began and that the research conforms to UEL's expectations. A full approval will still need to be made to UREC before the research continues at UEL in order to ensure that appropriate insurance cover is provided by UEL.

All students transferring into our University are required to hold enrolled and registered status for a minimum of twelve months in full-time mode, or twenty four months in part-time mode.

12. Attendance

The attendance requirements set out below apply to all international, home and EU students.

In the case of international students, the UK Border Agency (UKBA) requires our University to report any student who does not meet our attendance policy requirements (i.e. expected interactions/contacts).

For the purposes of this Code and postgraduate research degree programmes, our University interprets 'expected interactions/contacts' as below (this list is not exhaustive):

- An interaction between a student and Director of Studies or other member of the supervisory team may be face-to-face, via email, telephone, video- communication via the internet, and attendance in a laboratory or other University location; or submission of draft sections of the thesis. All interactions must be evidenced by a tangible record which must be preserved and produced as evidence should it be required.
- An interaction with our University could be enrolment, payment of fees, an Annual Review panel, a PhD transfer panel or oral examination but must be evidenced by some tangible record of the interaction which must be preserved and produced as evidence should it be required.

It will be the responsibility of the Director of Studies to proactively monitor attendance through relevant interactions. If a student, regardless of fee paying status, misses a scheduled interaction with the Director of Studies or other member of the supervisory team without communicating a verifiable reason the following must occur:

- Within 10 working days the Director of Studies will attempt to make contact with the student to ascertain their situation and to inform them that if they fail to re-engage with their studies, where necessary, this fact will be communicated to the UKBA.
- If the Director of Studies receives no response within a further 10 working days they will notify the School Research Degrees Leader and/or

member of School administrative staff appointed with responsibility for postgraduate research degrees that the student is not in attendance. The designated School contact will notify Student Records, and if relevant the International Office, that the student should be withdrawn.

- If however the Director of Studies does receive a response from the student they will schedule a face-to-face meeting, or a video/telephone conversation to occur within a further 10 working days of the response. If the student fails to attend the meeting or misses the scheduled conversation the Director of Studies must notify the School Research Degrees Leader and/or member of School administrative staff appointed with responsibility for postgraduate research degrees that the student is not in attendance. The designated School contact will notify Student Records, and if relevant the International Office, that the student should be withdrawn.

In **all** cases, where international students are concerned, notification must be passed to the International Office within the timeframes laid out above.

The Director of Studies and student should, on an annual basis, agree the nature and frequency of their scheduled meetings. Records should be kept of these meetings and submitted as part of the Annual Review process.

13. Ethics and governance for postgraduate research

All postgraduate research involving human participation, human material human data or animals must receive ethical clearance from University Research Ethics Committee (UREC) or where necessary a Research Ethics Committee recognised by the Secretary of State, **before** it can proceed (go here for more detail: <http://www.uel.ac.uk/qa/research/>).

As part of a student's induction, it is the responsibility of the relevant School, and their Director of Study in particular, to ensure sufficient attention has been drawn to ethical approval and that the student is aware of their responsibilities in relation to research ethics and research governance.

All postgraduate research students at our University have a duty to conduct their research in accordance with institutional expectations regarding ethical approval and our Code of Practice for Research. These apply to all levels of study and also to students at collaborative partners. Where it emerges that a student has conducted their research without ethical approval they, and their supervisors, may be subject to disciplinary action by the University.

In addition, if a student is found to have engaged in research where our University is the sponsor or co-sponsor without appropriate clearance their enrolment may be terminated at any stage in the research project. The University may also suspend arrangements for the student's viva while investigations are underway.

The principal role of UREC is to represent the interests of participants involved in

research projects where our University is involved and ensure that research continues to meet the University's expectations of ethical integrity. UREC regards the acquisition of informed consent from participants prior to the commencement of research as integral to this. Any research that involves groups of children and/or vulnerable adults as participants or takes place on premises where children and/or vulnerable adults are present will also require Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance (previously the Criminal Records Bureau or CRB).

Research ethics and research governance will be covered in one or more of the skills development session offered by the Graduate School as part of the Researcher Development Programme. Students are expected to attend all required ethics training offered by the University.

It is the responsibility of the Dean of School to ensure that all students undertaking research requiring ethical approval have the necessary indemnity cover, in line with our University's policy. Where research involving human participants, human data or human material is undertaken without ethical approval, the researcher(s), including the student, may be personally liable for any resulting claims or litigation that arise, and they will be subject to UEL's disciplinary procedures.

For the purposes of student research, the Director of Studies must always be identified as the Principal Investigator (PI).

All students must ensure that our University is clearly identified as sponsor or co-sponsor in all documentation passed to participants of the research, including the participant information sheet and consent form.

14. Health and safety/fieldwork

All postgraduate research students must, where appropriate, have been granted health and safety and/or fieldwork approval **before** their research can proceed.

The student and the Director of Study bear joint responsibility to ensure that where appropriate a health and safety and/or fieldwork review is produced and submitted to the relevant School process for approval.

Where the student's proposed programme of research involves overseas travel as part of the fieldwork, specific institutional approval is required from Vice-Chancellor's Group (VCG), involving a region-specific risk assessment. This must be gained **before** the student travels overseas. Where a student is found to have engaged in overseas travel for the purposes of research without VCG approval, they may be subject to disciplinary action and/or the programme of research may be terminated.

15. Funding and employment

Where a student is in receipt of external funding for their research degree programme, obligations may be imposed by the funding body. Students are advised to carefully review the conditions of the award and contact their Director of Studies before they enter into any commitment to undertake other work, be in paid or voluntary.

16. Suspension of enrolment and/or registration

Students seeking approval of suspension to the period of enrolment or registration should consult any professional and/or statutory regulatory body requirements related to the programme.

Our University is legally obligated to notify the UK Border Agency (UKBA) when an international student ceases attendance on a research degree.

In all cases, where an international student requests suspension of enrolment or registration, consultation with the International Students Advice Team is mandatory and must occur in advance of any consideration or recommendation by School Research Degrees Sub-Committee and/or Research Degrees Subcommittee. The Director of Studies and the student have principal responsibility for ensuring adherence to this policy.

Any period of suspension up to 12 months must be considered by School Research Degrees Sub-Committee in advance of the date requested for the start of the break. Retrospective requests will only be considered in the most exceptional circumstances and then by Research Degrees Subcommittee. Please consult the relevant sections of Part 9 of the Manual of General Regulations for further guidance and discuss the matter with your Director of Studies. Approved periods of suspension may commence only at the beginning of each academic semester, for periods from one semester up to a total of two academic years.

It is possible to request a further 12 months of intermission but this is only in exceptional circumstances. Any such request goes directly to Research Degrees Subcommittee. Retrospective requests will only be considered in the most exceptional circumstances. Please consult the relevant sections of Part 9 of the Manual of General Regulations for further guidance and discuss the matter with your Director of Studies.

It is not possible to take more than 24 months intermission across the period of a postgraduate research degrees programme.

Following 24 months of approved suspension to enrolment and/or registration where you are unable to return to your research the relevant School will withdraw you as a student of the University.

Throughout the period of suspension your access rights to on-campus resources, the Library and Moodle will be suspended. You have no access to supervisory support other than occasional contact regarding your return to the University.

17. Withdrawal

Students seeking withdrawal from a postgraduate research degree programme must first notify their academic School, in writing, following consultation with their Director of Studies. The academic School is responsible for then notifying Student Records, giving the last date of attendance and the stated reason(s) for withdrawal.

Normally a student is withdrawn at Annual Review or as a consequence of non-attendance. Any other request by a School to withdraw a student must be considered and approved by Research Degrees Subcommittee. The Director of Studies must explain the reason for the request and provide any supporting evidence.

Where an international student is withdrawn or requests withdrawal, it is the responsibility of the Director of Studies to ensure the International Office are consulted prior to any formal action being taken.

18. Supervision

The responsibility for providing appropriate supervisory support for postgraduate research students resides with the relevant academic School. Such support should be both academic and pastoral.

It is the responsibility of the School to ensure that an indicative supervisory allocation is made at the point of admission.

When a Director of Studies retires, takes a sabbatical or is on sick leave for longer than four weeks the School must ensure that a new Director of Studies is appointed through due process without delay. In the case of retirement and sabbatical these arrangements should be made prior to the absence of the Director of Studies. The School Research Degrees Leader is responsible for ensuring that this action is carried out.

Each student will be allocated a Director of Studies and a second supervisor as a minimum, with additional supervisors and advisors being added on the basis of the specific requirements of the student. The Director of Studies will be a member of staff of our University and will assume principal responsibility for the supervision of the student; the second supervisor may act independently of the Director of Studies, with both parties assuming joint responsibility for supervision up until the completion of the programme. The Director of Studies will also be responsible for agreeing the respective responsibilities and roles of the supervisory team and ensuring progress is reviewed at appropriate points in the academic year.

The regulations specify that supervisors should previously, and collectively, have supervised at least two students through to successful completion. Additionally, all academic staff appointed as supervisors are required to attend a mandatory staff development workshop within six months of being appointed.

The maximum number of students, whether full-time or part-time, that may be supervised by an individual as either Director of Studies or supervisor will be nine. This will be pro-rata for part-time members of staff. The maximum numbers laid out in this Code may only be exceeded if the Dean/Director of the relevant School or service confirms to Research Degrees Subcommittee that the quality of the student's learning experience will be protected through an adjustment of the academic workload for the relevant supervisor(s).

Emeritus Professors of our University are eligible to act as Director of Studies or supervisors for students.

In line with the expectations and standards of this Code and Part 9 of the Manual of General Regulations, the Director of Studies has principal responsibility for the following:

- To ensure the student is provided with guidance on the nature of research and corresponding standards; planning the research programme; specific guidance on relevant literature and sources; required attendance on relevant taught modules; that the student engages with emerging developments in their field of research;
- To ensure that all necessary applications to School Research Degrees Subcommittee, Research Degrees Subcommittee and if necessary University Research Ethics Committee are completed in good time and in good order;
- To ensure the student keeps notes of all formal meetings with their supervisors;
- To ensure that, where the expectations around attendance included in this Code are not met, the corresponding process is followed and, where required, the student is withdrawn from the programme and notice forwarded to appropriate parties (where withdrawal of an international student occurs, notification must be forwarded to the International Office);
- To ensure the student is fully aware of their rights and responsibilities; including an awareness of the regulations governing research degree programmes, our University's Health and Safety framework, Code of Practice for Research, Data Protection Policy, Ethics and any further standards relating to intellectual property rights and ownership;
- To ensure the student is aware of their minimum and maximum registration periods;
- To ensure the student is provided with advice and guidance on writing up the research, requesting written work as appropriate and returning work within an agreed timeframe; providing regular feedback and constructive criticism and to review the complete draft of the work prior to submission;
- To ensure the student is provided with guidance on the arrangements for meeting research and general transferable skills development needs, following a suitable needs analysis; to provide support in identifying and meeting research skills development needs and to advise on

developmental opportunities made available by the academic School and the Graduate School;

- To ensure the student is assisted with the development of employment-related skills;
- To ensure the student is encouraged to present their research at staff or graduate seminars and conferences and to engage with peers;
- To ensure the student is encouraged and assisted, where necessary, to publish the results of the research;
- To ensure that the academic School is aware of cases where consideration may need to be given to the protection of intellectual property rights and/or where confidentiality of the thesis may need to be considered or embargoed;
- To ensure the student has sufficient awareness of the ethical issues relating to the proposed research and, where necessary, makes application for formal approval to University Research Ethics Committee and external ethics committees where required, before the research is undertaken; ensuring the student is aware that no contact with potential participants for the proposed research may take place until approval is achieved and that to do so may result in disciplinary action;
- To ensure the student is advised on, and where necessary completes, the documents associated with the various stages of the programme and ensures the documents are submitted in a timely manner for approval by School Research Degrees Sub-Committee and, where necessary, Research Degrees Subcommittee;
- To ensure the student undertakes an Annual Review for each year of the programme;
- To ensure the student is informed in a timely manner if their progress and standard of work is unsatisfactory and for ensuring a suitable plan of action is put in place to address these issues;
- To ensure that, should a major change in the research project occur, appropriate adjustments are made to the supervisory arrangements and, where necessary, ethical approval of amendments are obtained from University Research Ethics Committee;
- To ensure, following discussion with the student, that suitable examiners for the final oral examination are recommended to Research Degrees Subcommittee at least three months before submission of the final thesis,;
- To ensure that once Research Degrees Subcommittee approves the examination arrangements no form of contact **regarding the thesis or the examination** occurs between the candidate/supervisors and the approved examiners. Where such contact occurs, the Director of the Graduate School will be responsible for taking appropriate action on behalf of the University;
- To ensure practical and logistical arrangements are in place for the examination and coordinate accordingly with administrative staff responsible for postgraduate research degrees within the School;
- To ensure the student is prepared, as far as is possible, for the examination;
- To attend the examination only where a direct request to do so is received from the student;
- To ensure the student is advised and supported appropriately where,

following the examination, further amendments to the thesis and/or a second oral examination are requested by the examiners.

The second supervisor will also play a significant role in the student's supervision, assuming a number of different roles and bringing specialised expertise and knowledge of particular research techniques or areas of study. Some roles that a second supervisor may reasonably assume are as follows:

- Acting as a temporary stand-in if the Director of Studies is absent;
- Providing a 'second voice' on the research project, progress, methodology etc to that provided by the Director of Studies;
- Providing pastoral support to the student;

The second supervisor should meet with the student shortly after induction (preferably at a joint meeting with the Director of Studies). They must be kept informed of the student's progress and should be fully involved in the Annual Review process.

Advisors may be appointed to supplement the advice and guidance offered by the supervisors but it must be made clear to them and to the student that they do not hold the status of a supervisor. The Director of Studies will be responsible for locating such support which may come from UEL or externally. Advisors must be included on the registration document considered by School Research Degrees Sub-Committee and Research Degrees Subcommittee.

The Dean is responsible for postgraduate research students in their School but normally this responsibility is devolved to the relevant Research Degrees Leader.

19. What to do when the supervisor/student relationship breaks down

In the first instance the student should speak to their School Research Degrees Leader. If this fails to resolve the issue to the satisfaction of the student, or the School Research Degrees Leader is one of the student's supervisors, the student should speak to the Director of the Graduate School who can offer advice independent of the School.

The university has a complaints process and if the student wishes to use it they should speak to the relevant administrator in Quality & Assurance Enhancement and a student union officer.

20. Registration

All postgraduate research students are subject to the two distinct processes of enrolment and registration. Professional doctorate students must complete their thesis and gain their award within 8 years of first enrolling (periods of intermission are in addition to this time) as well as within the maximum registration period. All other postgraduate research students must submit their thesis within the maximum registration period for their programme. Registration periods are set out in Part 9

of the Manual of General Regulations.

Registration is the formal process through which the student is placed on a specific programme of study leading to the award of a postgraduate research degree. Ordinarily, the date of registration is the initial date of enrolment for the MPhil/PhD programme. The process of registration should be completed within six months of enrolment for full-time students and within twelve months for part-time students. For professional doctorate students, the time between enrolment and registration will vary.

All research students are required to complete the formal process of registering the research via School Research Degrees Sub-Committee and Research Degrees Subcommittee on the relevant university form.

Direct registration for the degree of PhD may be permitted if the student holds a research Master's degree (MPhil or equivalent) awarded by our University or by a recognised United Kingdom or international higher education provider.

The registration of the research will be required to sufficiently demonstrate the following; the aims and objectives of the project; that the student can acquire the knowledge and skills to successfully complete the project within the appropriate timescale; that the proposed supervisory team has the skills, knowledge and experience necessary to successfully supervise the student; and that the research environment in the academic School is suitable and that sufficient resources are available to the student.

It is possible for a student to gain an extension to the registration periods outlined in Part 9 of the Manual of General Regulations. This application should be made directly to Research Degrees Subcommittee detailing the reasons for the request, including appropriate evidence.

Where a student has transferred on to a postgraduate research degree with our University from another HEI the period of registration may be adjusted subject to requirements in Part 9 of the Manual of General Regulations. The registration document should clearly indicate the length of registration with the previous HEI.

21. Transfer from MPhil to PhD

Where a student is enrolled and registered for a PhD via MPhil they must apply for approval to transfer to PhD. The transfer will initially be considered by School Research Degrees Sub-Committee before formal approval at Research Degrees Subcommittee.

The relevant academic School will be responsible for ensuring the request for transfer is heard by a panel consisting of a minimum of two and a maximum of six research active members of staff with appropriate academic and professional expertise, who are also independent of the supervisory team. The student must be present at the meeting of the panel and may request that the supervisory team also attend.

The application will normally be made after nine to fifteen months of full-time study (or part-time equivalent) and should be supported by a 3,000 to 6,000 word progress report including a brief review and discussion of the work already undertaken and an account of intended further work. This should also include a statement indicating how the research makes an original contribution to knowledge.

It is important that, where required, the ethical approval that has been gained is still appropriate.

22. Annual Review

A postgraduate research student has the right to request that the Annual Review meeting occurs without the presence of their supervisors. This arrangement may be for the entire meeting or for a section (either at the start or finish).

A postgraduate research student also has the right to insist that their supervisors are present at the meeting.

Continuation as an enrolled student is dependent on successful completion of an Annual Review, with academic Schools assuming lead responsibility for adherence to this policy. The School Research Degrees Leader should ensure that a list of all PGR students, with their Annual Review status, is tabled at each meeting of their Research Degrees Sub-Committee. These lists must be considered by the committee and any necessary actions recorded in the minutes.

Where the recommendation of the Annual Review panel is that the student should be withdrawn the report by the chair must be presented to Research Degrees Subcommittee for approval.

As part of the Postgraduate Research Student Annual Report, the School Research Degrees Leader will report on the overall progression of students, which will include statistical data reporting on Annual Review activity.

The Director of Studies is responsible for assuring the Review Panel that prior to the research commencing:

- any necessary health and safety/fieldwork assessment has been reviewed and approved
- any necessary ethical approval has been granted

The Director of Studies is also responsible for assuring the Review Panel annually that the existing health and safety/fieldwork approval and/or ethical approval are still appropriate for the research project.

The main purpose of the Annual Review process is to provide the student with support towards successful completion within the appropriate timescale for the degree, as specified in Part 9 of the Manual of General Regulations. In addition, the Annual Review process provides an opportunity for the student to feedback on

their learning experience.

The process of Annual Review will entail the Officer for School Research Degrees Sub-Committee, or appointed member of administrative staff, taking responsibility for the following:

- Providing all those involved in the Annual Review process (panel members, student and supervisors) with the date, time and venue of the review and a copy of the progress report;
- Providing the student with Form A, which must be returned at least three weeks prior to the meeting complete with the progress report. The form will be provided to the Chair of the panel prior to the review meeting;
- Providing the supervisory team with Form B, which must be completed and returned at least two weeks in advance of the meeting;
- Providing all panel members one week before the meeting with the progress report, and completed copies of Forms A and B. A blank copy of Form C should be sent to the Chair only. Form C should be completed by the Chair of the Annual Review panel;
- Ensuring that, following review and consideration by School Research Degrees Sub-Committee, a copy of all documentation is sent for approval at Research Degrees Subcommittee;

As part of the Annual Review, the student will be expected to make a brief oral presentation, ordinarily lasting no more than fifteen minutes. This should provide a brief summary of progress over the past twelve months and should conclude with any issues the student wishes to discuss with the panel or other skill development issues. The student should also give a narrative account of the work undertaken over the preceding twelve months.

In making their recommendation, the Annual Review panel must consider the progress made in the research programme taking into account the dates of enrolment and formal registration and the minimum and maximum periods of registration for the programme as specified in Part 9 of the Manual of General Regulations. In all cases, written feedback must be provided to the student within two weeks of the meeting.

In deciding upon the outcome of the Annual Review, the panel may recommend one of the following:

- That the student should progress to the next academic year;
- That an amended progress report is submitted where the panel agree to reconvene within two months at a time suggested by the Chair. The panel must also provide written guidance to the student on matters that need to be addressed prior to the subsequent review meeting;
- That the student be withdrawn.

Where a student fails to attend an Annual Review consideration should be given by the School to removing them under the provisions of our attendance policy

The Research Degrees Leader for the School is responsible for ensuring that every student enrolled on a postgraduate research degree has an Annual Review.

Once the thesis is submitted Annual Reviews cease.

23. Student Annual Review progress report

The Annual Review progress report should focus on development achieved in the preceding year and must, where relevant; refer back to the previous Annual Review progress report. If the student has specific issues that they wish to raise during the Annual Review, these should be included in the report.

The progress report must include the following:

- The title of the research programme and start date;
- The aims and methodology of the proposed research;
- An appropriate literature review;
- A summary of research training to date, including identification of any skills training needs;
- A forward plan for completion of the research and submission of the thesis;
- Any draft chapters

24. Write-up

Once the student has passed the minimum registration period (see Part 9) and they and their Director of Studies consider they have completed the research and require no form of supervisory support beyond feedback on the drafting of the thesis and/or administrative matters, the student may apply to Research Degrees Subcommittee for approval to transfer to the reduced-fee write-up status.

A student may hold write-up status for a maximum of twelve months only. It is the responsibility of School Research Degrees Sub-Committee to ensure appropriate mechanisms are in place to monitor write-up periods and ensure this expectation is met.

Where the student fails to submit the final version of the thesis within the write-up period of twelve months, they may be transferred back to the full fee status they held prior to transfer for an additional maximum period of twelve months.

Where submission is not achieved by the end of this additional twelve months period the relevant academic School will arrange for the student to be withdrawn.

As part of the application for transfer to write-up status, the Director of Studies will be responsible for providing the necessary confirmation to Research Degrees Subcommittee that the following conditions have been met:

- that the minimum registration period has elapsed;
- that a significant number of draft chapters of the thesis are complete

- or nearing completion;
- that the student no longer requires access to our University's research facilities, laboratories, resources and equipment, beyond that required for the writing-up of the research findings;
- that all primary data gathering and data analysis activities are complete.

25. Oral examination (*viva voce*)

The process of oral examination has two separate phases:

- The examination (reading) of the thesis
- Its defence in an oral examination (*viva voce*)

The aim of the *viva voce* process is to satisfy the examiners that; the thesis presented by the student is their own original work; that the student has a good command of the subject area; and that the thesis represents an original contribution to knowledge.

Students must decide, subject to satisfactory progress and in consultation with their Director of Studies and other supervisors, the most appropriate time to submit the thesis, taking into account the minimum and maximum registration periods as set out in Part 9 of the Manual of General Regulations. However, students have the right, once the minimum registration period has passed, to submit the thesis against the advice of their supervisors.

The student should, in liaison with the Director of Studies, submit an application for the approval of examination arrangements to the relevant School Research Degrees Sub-Committee. This application must then be formally endorsed by Research Degrees Subcommittee at least three months before the intended date of submission of the thesis.

The application for approval of oral examination arrangements must also be submitted prior to the expiration of the maximum registration period or the period of write-up. Academic Schools will be responsible for ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure adherence to this policy.

The proposed examiners must fulfil the criteria detailed in Part 9 of the Manual of General Regulations. Former employees of our University are not eligible to act as external examiners until an interval of at least three years has elapsed since the termination of their employment.

Once Research Degrees Subcommittee approves the proposed arrangements, examination conditions will be in effect. As such, no form of contact regarding all matters touching on the examination should occur between the candidate and/or their supervisors and the approved examiners. Where such contact occurs, the Director of the Graduate School will be responsible for taking appropriate action on behalf of the University.

Staff in the Graduate School will send the thesis and all necessary documentation to the examiners.

The member of staff within the School appointed to oversee the administration of postgraduate research degrees will be responsible for making practical arrangements for the oral examination, including room bookings, travel arrangements, hospitality and payment of any examiner expenses or fees.

26. The thesis

The submitted thesis must conform to the specifications for presentation detailed in Part 9 of the Manual of General Regulations. Where the submitted thesis does not, it will be returned to the student by the Graduate School.

Students are not permitted to submit the thesis until the minimum period of registration for the programme, as specified in Part 9 of the Manual of General Regulations, has elapsed, unless prior approval for a reduced period of registration has been obtained from Research Degrees Subcommittee.

The thesis must adopt the Harvard style of citation and referencing as outlined in the publication *Cite Them Right* (Pears, R. and Shields, G. (2013), 9th edn. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan). Students in the School of Psychology should use the APA referencing system as described in the same source.

The Graduate School will only accept a thesis, in the first instance or following amendments or other form of submittal, for dispatch to the examining team when it has been submitted, as a whole or in its constituent parts, to Turnitin. The student is required to demonstrate submission to Turnitin by ensuring the submitted thesis is accompanied by either the Turnitin receipt or the first page of the resultant Turnitin originality report.

The student has responsibility for making arrangements for the production of the thesis.

The thesis must be submitted to The Graduate School at least two months in advance of the date of the oral examination. The student is required to supply one copy for each examiner and one copy for the Chair of Examiners. These copies must be circulated to afford the examiners six weeks reading time as a minimum.

27. Academic misconduct

Cases of academic misconduct will be dealt with in the manner proscribed in Part 8 of the Manual of General Regulations.

For the purposes of our Regulations, academic misconduct is defined as any action(s) or behaviour likely to confer an unfair advantage in assessment, whether by advantaging a candidate for assessment or disadvantaging (deliberately or

unconsciously) another or others. Examples of such misconduct are given below: the list is **not** exhaustive and the use of any form of unfair or dishonest practice in assessment not itemised below can be considered potential misconduct. A student cannot initiate an action against another student, only an academic member of staff within the university can initiate an action.

Coursework Submitted for Assessment

- (a) The submission of material (written, visual or oral), originally produced by another person or persons or oneself, without due acknowledgement*, so that the work could be assumed to be the student's own. For the purposes of these Regulations, this includes incorporation of significant extracts or elements taken from the work of (an)other(s) or oneself, without acknowledgement or reference*, and the submission of work produced in collaboration for an assignment based on the assessment of individual work. (Such misconduct is typically described as plagiarism and collusion.)

*(Note: To avoid potential misunderstanding, any phrase that is not the student's own or is submitted by the student for a different assessment should normally be in quotation marks or highlighted in some other way. It should also be noted that the incorporation of *significant* elements of (another(s) work or of one's own work submitted for a different assessment, even with acknowledgement or reference, is unacceptable academic practice and will normally result in failure of that item or stage of assessment.)

- (b) Being party to any arrangement whereby the work of one candidate is represented as that of another.
- (c) The submission of work that is not one's own (e.g. work that has been purchased, or otherwise obtained from a "cheat site").
- (d) Offering an inducement to staff and/or other persons connected with assessment.

28. The preliminary reports

The examiners are required to submit independent preliminary reports on the thesis. Inter alia, in their preliminary report the examiners state if the thesis is at the required level to proceed to the oral examination.

The preliminary reports must be received by the Graduate School at least seven days prior to the oral examination. Copies of each preliminary report will be sent to each examiner and the Chair. If all preliminary reports are not returned seven days prior to the examination, the Director of the Graduate School will decide if the oral examination can go ahead.

29. Chair of examiners

Although required to be present at the oral examination, the Chair of Examiners has no role in the assessment of the thesis or other form of submittal. The role of the Chair is to ensure that due process is followed and to advise the examiners on any issue concerning the regulations.

The Chair will receive copies of the preliminary reports prepared by the examiners in advance of the oral examination. These are provided for information only and to assist the Chair in answering queries from the examiners about matters of process. The Chair is not expected or required to be a subject area specialist.

The involvement of the Chair does not begin until the oral examination itself, but it is necessary that the Chair has a clear understanding of the process leading up to the oral examination and the respective responsibilities of others involved...

30. Conducting the examination

The examiners should convene for a pre-meeting before the oral examination in order to discuss their preliminary reports and the questions they wish to put forward. The Chair must be present at this meeting. No other parties may be present at this meeting.

The student may wish to give a short presentation at the outset of the oral examination. This should be no more than 15 minutes in length. The student must indicate this intention on the form nominating the examiners. The Chair of examiners must notify the examiners in the pre-meeting that the student will be giving a brief presentation.

Once the examiners are prepared, the Chair will ask the student to join them and open the proceedings. Members of the supervisory team may also attend where the student has specifically requested their presence. The student must indicate their wishes regarding this matter on the form nominating the examiners. Members of the supervisory team may not attend the oral examination without the consent of the student.

Where supervisors are present for the examination, they must not contribute to the defence of the thesis or participate in the exercising of academic judgement by the examiners. No other persons may attend the examination.

The length of the oral examination will vary according to the individual nature of the work being assessed. The student should normally expect to undergo a mock oral examination as part of the final Annual Review meeting. The Chair of the examination has overall responsibility for ensuring the examination is not overly long and may, for example, suggest a break in the proceedings.

It is not now considered good practice for the examiners to indicate to the student at the start of the viva their opinion of the thesis or other submittal. As a

consequence, examiners are required to reserve judgement until after the oral examination and must ensure the student is given a fair opportunity to present a defence of the thesis or other form of submittal and demonstrate their academic ability.

The student and any supervisors must withdraw prior to the deliberations of the examiners on the outcome of the examination.

31. Guidelines on Oral Examinations for Postgraduate Research Degrees via Video-Link

Detailed guidelines are available on the Graduate School website. These are intended to ensure the integrity of the oral examination process where oral examinations are conducted by video-link. The guidelines are intended to be used in cases where it is necessary, rather than desirable, for oral examinations to be conducted via video link and Research Degrees Subcommittee will only grant approval for conducting a viva by video link in exceptional circumstances.

32. Outcomes of the Examination

Examiners may informally indicate their recommendation on the result of the examination to the student during the viva, but must make it clear that the final decision to award the degree rests with our University.

The outcomes permissible for an oral examination of a postgraduate research degree are detailed in Part 9 of the Manual of General Regulations.

Following the oral examination, the examiners must, where they are in agreement, present a joint report and recommendation relating to the award of the degree to our University. The Chair will be supplied with the appropriate form for this purpose which must be returned to the Graduate School.

In cases where there is a difference of opinion between examiners, each examiner must complete a separate form.

The preliminary reports and joint recommendation of the examiners must together provide sufficiently detailed comments on the scope and quality of the work to enable our University to satisfy itself that the criteria for the award of the degree has been met.

Where the recommendation is for minor or substantial amendments to be made to the thesis, the Graduate School will communicate the examiners' recommendation to the student and Director of Studies along with a report detailing the amendments. The Chair of examiners will be responsible for ensuring one of the examiners is responsible for producing the report which details the amendments.

If it is not practical to draft the report indicating required amendments immediately following the oral examination the examiners will be given time to prepare their notes, but the Chair must ensure that the form indicating the outcome of the viva is completed and returned to the Graduate School immediately after the oral examination. This report must be supplied to the Graduate School within 10 working days.

The Graduate School will, once they have been made available by the examiners, supply the student with all necessary reports and documents and inform the student of the deadline for submission of the revised thesis.

The Chair of examiners is responsible for ensuring that one of the examiners is nominated to review the revised thesis and for confirming that the required amendments have been successfully completed. To expedite this revision procedure it is recommended that the internal examiner fulfils this role but the decision rests with the examination team.

Where the changes to the thesis do not require a second oral examination confirmation from the nominated examiner(s) that the revisions have been carried out to their satisfaction conclude the examination process.

Where the revisions to the thesis do require a second oral examination, the member of staff within the academic School appointed to handle the administration of postgraduate research degrees will be responsible for making the practical arrangements and informing the Graduate School of the agreed date and time.

The outcomes for a second oral examination are detailed in Part 9 of the Manual of General Regulations.

Once the examination process is concluded the recommendation of the examiners and all relevant reports are reviewed by the Director of the Graduate School who will then make a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor, as Chair of Academic Board, regarding the award. The decisions of the Vice-Chancellor are reported to the next meeting of Academic Board for endorsement.

33. Feedback mechanisms

All Schools will have in place formal and informal procedures for gaining feedback from students concerning the quality of their learning experience. In addition, the University will regularly review findings from participation in student experience surveys, such as the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), and report back to relevant institutional committees, such as Research Degrees Subcommittee and Academic Board.

Collaborative partners offering postgraduate research programmes may also run their own feedback surveys regarding student experience. When such surveys take place the analysis and any resulting action plan will be tabled at Research Degrees Subcommittee.

34. Research Misconduct

UEL has a Code of Practice for Research and a Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research. Both documents can be found in the Graduate School document library.

35. Complaints and Appeals

UEL has formal procedures for complaints and appeals but students are advised to seek resolution over any problems, in the first instance, through informal channels.

Where a student wishes to have an informal discussion with an independent individual outside of their School they should contact a UELSU Student Union officer and/or the Director of the Graduate School. The formal procedures for a complaint can be found in Part 14 and for an appeal in Part 9 of the Manual of General Regulations.