Quality Assurance Code of Practice

Research Degrees

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NOTE: Changes are shown in red and can be found on page 2 and pages 10-13.
1. **Purpose and Scope**

1.1. This QA statement sets out the principles on which postgraduate research study provision will be undertaken at the University of Bath. The statement sets out the main stages of higher degrees by research.

1.2. It applies to:
- degrees based solely on research (MPhil, PhD);
- the research elements of professional doctorates (EdD, DBA, EngD, DClinPsy etc.) or research degrees (MPhil, PhD) with a formally assessed taught element. Taught elements of these programmes will be subject to the relevant QA Code of Practice Statements.

1.3. Information on the admission and recruitment of postgraduate research students is covered in QA22: Recruitment, Selection and Admission of Students. Information on the use of postgraduate research students in teaching activities is set out in QA9: Development of all Staff and Students undertaking Teaching Activities. Staff/Student Liaison Committees are covered in QA48 Annex A.

1.4. This QA statement may need to be read in conjunction with:
- The University Regulations (in particular Regulation 16: Entrance Requirements and Conditions for the Award of Higher Degrees);
- University Ordinance15 on Examiners and Examinations.

2. **Principles**

2.1. The University of Bath has an outstanding national and international reputation for the quality of its research, its research-led teaching and its distinct academic approach.

2.2. The University recognises that research postgraduates should be fully included in research life in all Faculties, Departments and the School and this document sets out the principles by which it seeks to ensure that a consistently high quality of education is delivered to all those registered for research degrees.

2.3. The University of Bath Research Strategy is available [here](#).

3. **Roles and Responsibilities**

3.1. The following Committees/Boards have a formal role in matters relating to postgraduate research provision:
- **University Research Students Committee** is responsible to Senate for the overall coordination and monitoring of, and policy advice in relation to, postgraduate research study provision at an institutional level;
- **Faculty/School Boards of Studies** are responsible to Senate for all matters relating to the organisation of education, teaching and research in the Faculty/School. For postgraduate research provision this includes the appointment of Internal and External Examiners and approving the recommendations of Progression and Degree Boards of Examiners;
- **Faculty/School Research Students Committees** are responsible to Boards of Studies for overseeing all matters concerning individual postgraduate research students, including the approval of candidature and monitoring progress, and Faculty/School wide data, including completion rate data. The Chairs of Faculty/School Research Students Committees (usually Associate Deans (Graduate Students)) have authority delegated by the Faculty/School Research Students Committees to approve certain matters of research student registration and progression.
3.2. The following offices/staff are responsible for supporting and overseeing particular matters in relation to postgraduate research provision:

- The **Student Records and Examinations Office** is responsible for advising on all regulatory matters and for overseeing the maintenance of postgraduate student records in conjunction with Graduate School administrators;
- The **Learning and Teaching Enhancement Office** is responsible for the Code of Practice and supporting and advising on all aspects relating to the maintenance and enhancement of research student provision; **the Graduate Centre** in identifying, developing and delivering postgraduate skills training;
- The **Admissions Office** provides general oversight over admissions procedures and signs off on all offers generated within the Graduate Schools;
- **Graduate Schools** are responsible for providing administrative leadership and operational management for postgraduate recruitment and provision including the management of processes relating to admissions, student progression and quality and standards;
- The **Associate Deans (Graduate Students)** are responsible for driving forward postgraduate research activity within the Graduate Schools/Graduate Division, by maintaining oversight of all activities involving postgraduate research student provision, providing timely advice to the academic community and its management and contributing to the development of coherent policies and direction for postgraduate development. They are responsible for ensuring that Annual Monitoring Reports on research degree provision are completed within their Faculties/the School and submitted to the University Research Students Committee;
- **Heads of Departments/ Dean of School** are responsible for ensuring that adequate resources, including adequate and appropriate supervision, are made available to support study provision for postgraduate research students in their Department/School;
- **Directors of Studies** are responsible for the oversight and co-ordination of research degree provision across a Department or School;
- **Supervisory Teams** are responsible for ensuring that research students receive appropriate guidance and support throughout their registration with the University;
- **Lead Supervisors** are responsible for ensuring that their research students’ progress satisfactorily and in accordance with the University’s Regulations and Quality Assurance expectations. Appendix 1 summarises the main responsibilities of the lead supervisor and supervisory team towards the student.

3.3. **Postgraduate Research Students** are responsible for undertaking research; undertaking appropriate skills training; maintaining the progress of their work; taking the initiative in raising problems or difficulties; and deciding when to submit their thesis, within the constraints of the University’s Regulations. Appendix 2 summarises these responsibilities.

4. **Recruitment and Admissions**

4.1 General information about the recruitment and admission of postgraduate research students is available in **QA22 Recruitment, Selection and Admission of Students**.

4.2 **Regulation 16** sets out the admissions requirements for all higher degrees of the University.

4.3 Wherever possible, a student will be given the opportunity during the admissions process of discussing the selection of their supervisor(s) after meeting the potential supervisor(s). It is recognised that in some cases, because of the distances involved and funding arrangements, it may be necessary to agree a supervisor by correspondence.

4.4 Offer letters specify as far as possible an outline of the intended research topic and the name(s) of the proposed supervisor(s), but these are subject to confirmation at the time of approval of candidature (see Section 6). In the case of professional doctorates, the
research topic and supervisory arrangements will not be established until after the student has registered, so the offer letter will therefore not include this information.

<table>
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<th>Good practice</th>
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<td>In the case of Professional Doctorates, where students may experience greater work-related pressures, employers are asked to provide written confirmation that they undertake to release the student for a specific amount of time per week for study. This helps ensure that study time is preserved and not eroded over time.</td>
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5. Induction

5.1 The University of Bath is committed to providing postgraduate research students with clear and accessible information at the time of their registration to make them aware of, and to assist them in taking full advantage of, the academic and social environment in which they will be undertaking their studies.

5.2 The University will work with the Students’ Union to ensure that new research students have access to an appropriate induction to the central support services offered by the University and the Students’ Union. Induction events will take place at the start of the academic year and at other points when research students join the University as appropriate.

5.3 The University will ensure that current and comprehensive information is provided for postgraduate research students.

Such information will include:
- the University's Postgraduate Guide;
- information about the Postgraduate Association;
- the University Regulations;
- relevant Quality Assurance Code of Practice Statements;
- information about University support services.

All forms relating to postgraduate research student progression and examination are available from the Graduate Resources web pages.

5.4 The University maintains a large amount of information relevant to new students who may have not had the opportunity to attend a formal, central induction event when joining the University. Students will be invited to attend the next scheduled induction event. However, new students are encouraged to look at the Student Records and Examinations Office and Graduate Schools/Graduate Division websites.

5.5 Departments, the School and Faculties are responsible for arranging local induction activities and for ensuring that postgraduate students are provided with up-to-date and comprehensive information on the Department/School/Faculty, regardless of time of year at which a student starts. It is especially important that the role of the Director of Studies, including the name and contact details of the relevant individual, be brought to the attention of postgraduate research students by the Department/School at the earliest opportunity.

5.6 Induction within a Department/School/Faculty may incorporate a variety of elements, including:
- a welcome pack of information about the Department/School/Faculty;
- a Departmental/School/Faculty handbook or other source of information, providing local
administrative information, signposting relevant University policies, practices and documents, as well as providing an introduction to the academic culture of the Department/School/Faculty and the student experience on a research degree programme;
• an initial meeting with members of the supervisory team;
• introduction to key people within the Department/School/Faculty;
• social events with opportunities to meet other postgraduate research students, both new and current;
• sharing information about the research interests of other postgraduate research students in the Department/School/Faculty via a website or the Personal Information Portal;
• a Health and Safety briefing;
• an initial meeting with their Subject Librarian.

5.7 The relevant Department/School is responsible for ensuring that the following minimum facilities are available to all full-time campus-based research students:
• a desk and appropriate chair in a suitable, non-hazardous environment;
• a reasonable amount of secure space for personal possessions;
• a reasonable amount of shelving and/or filing space;
• access to a telephone in accordance with Departmental/School guidelines and practices;
• access to Departmental/School photocopying facilities;
• access to networked PC and associated printing facilities, as appropriate for each student’s programme of research.

6. Approval of Candidature

6.1 The process of approval of candidature for a postgraduate research student seeks to ensure that:
• the topic of research and supervisory arrangements are clearly defined as soon as possible following the student’s registration (see Section 7 for supervisory requirements);
• training requirements are clearly established as early as possible following the student’s registration;
• in the case of part-time or externally-based students, the attendance requirements are clearly established as early as possible following the student’s registration;
• the proposed research is of a broadly appropriate level for the intended award and is feasible within the proposed timescale;
• the supervisor(s) are capable of providing the student with appropriate academic guidance throughout the course of study;
• any ethical issues that are likely to be raised by the research are considered and appropriate action taken by the Faculty/School including, referring the issue to the Ethics Committee where appropriate;
• an appropriate Data Management plan has been drawn up for the project in accordance with the University’s Research Data Policy;
• any restrictions on access to the thesis are considered and approved.

6.2 The candidature form is available from the Graduate Schools/Graduate Division and the Graduate Resources web pages.

6.3 A student’s lead supervisor is responsible for ensuring that all the arrangements and information required for the approval of candidature are in place as soon as possible after the student has registered. The lead supervisor is responsible for completing the candidature form and for submitting it to the Faculty/School Research Students Committee. The lead supervisor is also responsible for ensuring that the finalised thesis title is approved
by the Faculty/School Research Students Committee as soon as possible; any substantive changes to the thesis title or project description during the student’s registration require formal approval by the Faculty/School Research Students Committee. The final thesis title must be confirmed in the documentation in which approval for the appointment of the Board of Examiners is sought.

6.4 The candidature form for MPhil/PhD students should be completed and submitted within one month (full-time students) or three months (part-time students) of the student's initial registration. Where it is not possible to submit the candidature form within this time, a report should be made to the Faculty/School Research Students Committee, outlining progress with the submission.

6.5 Where students are registered for postgraduate research degrees with a taught element, the candidature form does not necessarily need to be submitted within one/three months of initial registration, but must be submitted in accordance with the particular programme regulations and within one month (full-time students) or three months (part-time students) of the student embarking upon the research element of the programme.

6.6 The Faculty/School Research Students Committee is responsible for confirming the details of the candidature and for ensuring that:

- the candidate is appropriately qualified for the proposed programme of work and training;
- the proposed programme of work can be completed in time and to the depth required to obtain the degree for which the candidate is ultimately expected to be registered;
- proper supervision can be provided and maintained throughout the research period;
- the appropriate resources are available;
- any supplementary studies are identified and approved;
- an appropriate Data Management plan has been drawn for the project in accordance with the University’s Research Data Policy;
- a date for the student’s first attempt at confirmation of PhD/transfer from MPhil to PhD is set, normally within twelve months of the student’s first registration, and communicated to the student and the lead supervisor where a student has transferred into the University from another institution and the minimum period of study is reduced in order to take into account previous study, the student will, in accordance with Ordinance 14.5, be registered for no fewer than 12 months of full-time study or 24 months of part-time study before submission of the thesis/portfolio.

6.7 Should the Faculty/School Research Students Committee have concerns about any aspect of the candidature as set out on the form, these should be referred to the Director of Studies for resolution. Where necessary the Director of Studies should refer to the supervisor and/or student as appropriate. In the event that the Director of Studies is a member of the student’s supervisory team, the Head of Department/School should be consulted instead.

7. Collaborative Provision

7.1 Scope and Definitions

7.1.1 Collaborative provision denotes educational provision leading to an award, or to specific credit, of the University of Bath delivered and/or supported and/or assessed through an arrangement with a partner organisation.

7.1.2 Within research degree provision collaborative activity takes two main forms: individual student-based, and programme-based:

i) **Student-based**: students who are registered on an individual basis for a doctoral award at another university conduct research at Bath, and students registered on an individual basis for a doctoral degree awarded solely by the University of Bath conduct
some or all of their research elsewhere;

ii) **Programme-based:** students who are registered on a research degree programme run by the University of Bath and at least one other institution and where the award(s) is/are made either by one institution, or separately by more than one institution.

### 7.2 Principles and Overview

#### 7.2.1
The University of Bath is committed to supporting enriched student learning experiences through collaborative provision where appropriate, whilst working to ensure the overall academic standard of the awards conferred by the University of Bath and the quality of the learning experiences and associated support for students.

#### 7.2.2
The University takes a risk-based approach to developing and managing its collaborative activity, whereby effort expended will be proportionate to factors such as the nature of the partner organisation, and the complexity of the arrangements, thereby ensuring that the quality and standards of all collaborative provision will be as rigorous, secure and open to scrutiny as those for programmes delivered entirely by the University of Bath.

#### 7.2.3
The development of collaborative provision should be set within the context of the [University's Education Strategy](#) (2013/14-2015/16) and the [University's International Strategy](#).

#### 7.2.4
The development of collaborative arrangements involving international partners should be set within the context of the University's International Strategy helping to develop and maintain institutional and Departmental/School links and long-term multi-stranded research, teaching and knowledge-transfer partnerships with internationally renowned research-intensive universities around the world.

#### 7.2.5
The University does not permit serial arrangements i.e. where a partner of the University offers approved collaborative provision to a third party.

### 7.3 Roles and Responsibilities

#### 7.3.1
Arrangements made on a student-by-student basis are subject to scrutiny by the Faculty/School Research Students Committee under the processes described in Section 6 (approval of candidature) of QA7.

#### 7.3.2
Arrangements which are programme-based require wider scrutiny and approval, and responsibilities depend upon the extent to which the programme includes formally-assessed taught elements (see paragraph 7.3.6).

#### 7.3.3
A member of Department/School staff should be identified as being the Lead Proposer of a collaborative proposal (this should usually be an academic member of staff). This person is responsible for managing the process of approving the proposal; acting as a key liaison person with the proposed collaborative partner; and for overseeing the monitoring, review and renewal of the arrangement once approved. Where a lead person leaves the University the responsibility for overseeing the arrangement will rest with the Head of Department/Dean of the School of Management until a replacement is identified.

#### 7.3.4
The following staff and University officers are responsible for providing professional and legal advice as part of the process of considering a proposal:
- Director of Academic Registry
- Director of Finance
- Legal Advisers
- Director of International Partnerships and Head of International Relations
- Quality Enhancement Officer (LTEO)
7.3.5 The following committees are responsible for scrutinising the strategic advisability and/or academic case for a collaborative arrangement at programme level:

- **Boards of Studies** are responsible for giving strategic consideration to proposals from the School/Departments for academic collaboration and for recommending proposals to the Academic Programmes Committee;
- **Academic Programmes Committee** is responsible for recommending to Senate for approval of new partner organisations and for giving initial approval for research degree collaborative arrangements. It is also responsible for approving amendments, renewals and termination of any collaborative arrangements;
- **Senate** is responsible for giving strategic approval to new partner organisations. Senate is also responsible for the academic standards of all programmes leading to an award of the University of Bath;
- In the case of programmes involving significant formally-assessed taught elements (for example Integrated PhD programmes in which the first year consists of a master’s programme, and Professional Doctorate qualifications), **Faculty/School Learning, Teaching and Quality Committees** are responsible for scrutinising the taught elements of proposals for collaborative partners to deliver new or existing programmes, proposals for amending such arrangements, and proposals for renewing such arrangements, and providing comments to the Faculty/School Research Students Committee, which will consider the proposal in its entirety;
- **Faculty/School Research Students Committees** are responsible for scrutinising proposals for collaborative partners to deliver new or existing programmes, proposals for amending such arrangements, and proposals for renewing such arrangements, and to make recommendations to the Programmes and Partnerships Approval Committee.
- **Programmes and Partnerships Approval Committee** is responsible (following recommendation from Faculty/School Research Students Committees), for approving proposals for collaborative partners to deliver new or existing programmes, proposals for amending such arrangements and proposals for renewing such arrangements.
- **University Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee** is responsible for overseeing the success of collaborative arrangements and for the effectiveness of the approval, amendment, renewal and withdrawal procedures set out in this statement. University Research Students Committee is responsible for advising University Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee in this area.

7.3.6 The approval process for programme-based collaborative research degrees is set out in QA20 Collaborative Provision. Please refer all queries to the Quality Enhancement Officer in LTEO.

8. **Supervision**

8.1 The University of Bath is committed to providing each research student with supervisory arrangements that provide appropriate support and guidance to facilitate successful study. A supervisory team must be appointed for every student.

8.2 The aim of establishing a supervisory team is to ensure that each student has access to a breadth of experience and knowledge not only in their discipline(s) but also in terms of general training and support. The following criteria for the appointment of members of the supervisory team are based upon this principle. Hence it is expected that at least one member of the supervisory team will be currently engaged in research in the relevant discipline(s), so as to ensure that the direction and monitoring of the student’s progress is informed by up to date subject knowledge and research developments. Further to this, the range of experience and knowledge across the supervisory team will mean that the student always has access to someone with experience of supporting research student(s) through to successful completion of their programme.
8.3 Criteria for appointment of members of the supervisory team:

A student's supervisory team will normally consist of a lead supervisor and at least one other person of appropriate academic standing. Within this team:

8.3.1 the lead supervisor must normally be a member of the University’s academic staff (as defined in Section 25 of the University’s statutes). If the supervisor is not employed on a full-time basis by the University, the other members of the supervisory team must be available to offer adequate support to the student;

8.3.2 the lead supervisor must have appropriately detailed knowledge in the student's area of research;

8.3.3 the lead supervisor must be able to make available to the student sufficient time and resource (including having access to appropriate equipment) to support the student’s work;

8.3.4 supervisors must not assume responsibility for lead supervision of an inappropriately large number of students; this number will vary according to the discipline and nature of the research as specified by the Faculty/School Research Students Committee and indicated on the candidature form. Heads of Department/School are responsible for ensuring supervisory loads are reasonable;

8.3.5 if the lead supervisor does not have experience of successfully supervising students to graduation with research degrees, then the supervisory team must include another member of the University’s academic staff who does;

8.3.6 if the lead supervisor does not hold a doctoral degree, the supervisory team must include another member of the University’s academic staff who does;

8.3.7 if the lead supervisor is still under probation, the supervisory team must include another member of the University’s academic staff who is not under probation;

8.3.8 visiting professors/fellows may be members of the supervisory team. Exceptionally, visiting professors/fellows may be designated the lead supervisor, provided that the Department/School can demonstrate that they are properly trained and supported and all other supervisory roles are fulfilled;

8.3.9 the supervisory team should be constituted in accordance with the principles set out in 8.2, in order to provide advice and support in relation to the research topic, training requirements and pastoral care. The allocation of specific roles within the supervisory team is left to the discretion of Departments/Schools, in recognition that this may vary according to the discipline and the student’s needs. In cases where the team includes a supervisor or lead supervisor who is new to supervision, a more experienced member of the team will assume responsibility for mentoring the new supervisor.

8.4 Students registered as ‘externally-based’ are required to have an external supervisor (see Regulations 16.3i,16.5i) and where postgraduate research students are undertaking work outside the University or pursuing research which involves collaboration with an external body it may be appropriate for an external supervisor to be appointed as a member of the supervisory team. The need for an external supervisor must be outlined in the candidature form submitted to the Faculty/School Research Students Committee, and an internal supervisor must also be appointed. The Faculty/School Research Students Committee must be satisfied that provision has been made for adequate contact between the internal and external supervisors.

8.5 The supervision arrangements for each of the named professional doctorates are set out in
the programme regulations for the particular programme.

8.6 The Director of Studies must satisfy her/himself that the potential supervisory team meets the criteria stated above, and that there is sufficient academic expertise available in order to:

- make reasonable provision for continuity of supervision for the expected duration of the student’s registration;
- allow for internal examiner(s) to be appointed from outside the supervisory team for the final submission;
- where applicable, allow for Examiners of the MPhil/PhD transfer/PhD confirmation report to be appointed from outside the potential supervisory team.

8.7 Mechanisms for confirming the appointment of a supervisory team:

8.7.1 The provisional supervision arrangements for each applicant should normally be stated in the formal offer letter (see Section 4), and any subsequent changes made before initial registration notified to the applicant in writing, and to the Graduate School, so that the Graduate School may change the student’s record in conjunction with the Student Records and Examinations Office.

8.7.2 When the candidature of the student is submitted for approval to the Faculty/School Research Students Committee (see Section 6), this must include a statement from the Director of Studies confirming that the supervision arrangements conform to the criteria set out above;

8.7.3 Changes to supervisory arrangements made after the approval of the candidature require a further statement by the Director of Studies that the criteria set out above have been met, and will need approval by the Faculty/School Research Students Committee.

8.8 In cases where the original lead supervisor leaves the employ of the University, is on formal leave of absence for a period in excess of two months or, exceptionally, is no longer able to supervise the student for other reasons, the Director of Studies will make appropriate recommendations to the Faculty/School Research Students Committee to provide for the continuance of supervision (normally by a member of the academic staff of the University in accordance with paragraph 8.3 above).

Where a supervisor is absent for a more limited time, arrangements should be made for a deputy to undertake the duties of the lead supervisor on a temporary basis. Where a supervisory team is in place it may be appropriate for another member of the team to occupy the role of lead supervisor on a temporary basis. The student should be consulted when changes of this kind are being made to supervisory arrangements and should be kept informed of any changes made.

8.9 Details of procedures for resolving problems that may arise in the supervisory relationship, including conflicts of interest, are detailed in Sections 19 and 20.

9. Establishing a Programme of Work

9.1. It is important that, at the start of a postgraduate research student’s studies, the student and the lead supervisor discuss and agree the following:

- a schedule of regular formal meetings. (These may be supplemented where appropriate by more frequent informal meetings);
- any formal courses of study or seminars, colloquia, etc. that the student is required to attend and/or be assessed in and, where stated in the scheme of studies, successfully complete as part of the programme, including those relating to generic skills training requirements (see 9.2 below);
• a date, normally within twelve months of initial registration for the completion of the programme of work required in connection with transfer of registration from MPhil to PhD or confirmation of PhD registration (see Section 10 below), and for any other required progress reports;
• where appropriate, a date for the submission of the thesis outline;
• a date for the submission of the completed thesis (which should comply with the timescales set out in University Regulation 16, and be considerably before the expiry of the maximum period of registration, in order to allow time for examination and, where necessary, corrections, before the registration is normally due to expire);
• where there is a budget associated with the project work, the supervisor and student should plan and agree the expenditure arrangements.

It is important that the student and lead supervisor establish early in the student’s studies clear expectations about the timing and requirements of these significant academic milestones in order to minimise difficulties later.

9.2. Where students are registered for a research degree with a formally assessed taught element, which must be successfully completed, the timings within the programme of work for candidature (see 6.5), confirmation (see 11.3) and review meetings (see 10.4) may, within reason, be different from those outlined in this statement, but must be in accordance with the approved scheme of studies.

9.3. The lead supervisor is responsible for undertaking training needs analysis and discussing requirements for generic skills training and personal development planning with a student at the beginning of their studies and at least on an annual basis. The lead supervisor is responsible for bringing to their attention appropriate training opportunities available at the University of Bath and, where appropriate, outside of the University of Bath. Except where explicitly stated otherwise, completion of training specified for the first year of a student’s registration during candidature approval is a condition of transfer to/confirmation of PhD registration.

9.4. University level generic skills provision is coordinated by the Graduate Development and Centre Manager, Researcher Development Unit, and supervisors can seek additional information from the Manager. The University of Bath’s central services (Library, Computing Services, Careers Service) offer a wide variety of generic skills training. In addition, faculties and schools coordinate development opportunities and training programmes for postgraduate researchers in their discipline. The skills training provision for researchers at the University is mapped against the National Researcher Development Framework (RDF) which should be used when planning research postgraduate development.

9.5 Sponsors of research, such as Research Councils, government departments or industrial and commercial organisations, may insist on certain obligations being met by the University. Staff and students working on projects funded by external sponsors should make sure they are fully aware of the conditions of the funding including the title to and protection of the intellectual property rights in the results.

Advice and guidance in the negotiations of, and compliance with, such contractual obligations is available from RDSO and the University Legal Office as appropriate. See also Ordinance 22 ‘Intellectual Property’ and Regulation 16.1h.

10. Review and Progress Arrangements for Students

10.1. Regular review of the progress of postgraduate research students is necessary to ensure that students are progressing satisfactorily with their research work and training specified on the candidature form. This also enables both student and supervisor(s) to identify any potential problems at the earliest opportunity and to help ensure that work is completed to
an agreed timescale.

10.2. The Director of Studies is responsible for ensuring that students are advised in writing (usually via the Departmental/School handbook) at the start of their studies of the schedule and procedures for undertaking reviews of students’ progress in that Department/School.

10.3. Formal reviews of progress will be undertaken every six months, starting six months after the student’s initial registration.

10.4 Where students are registered for postgraduate research degrees with a formally assessed taught element the first review must take place after six months of the student commencing on the research element of the programme.

10.5 The approved scheme of studies for the named professional doctorates and PhD programmes with a formally assessed taught element will set out the requirements for meetings of the student and the supervisory team.

10.6 Students and supervisors must agree on the form and frequency of other progress reports which may be required.

10.7 If a supervisor is dissatisfied with the progress being made by a student then this should be brought to the attention of the student at the earliest opportunity and, wherever possible, in time to consider ways of resolving issues ahead of submission of a formal review report.

10.8 If a student is dissatisfied with progress, whether due to reasons beyond their control or because of difficulties in establishing an effective working relationship with the supervisor, the Director of Studies should be informed by the student of these problems as soon as possible. In the event that the Director of Studies is a member of the student’s supervisory team, the Head of Department/School should be informed. In the event that this action does not resolve the matter, the student may approach the Research Postgraduate Ombudsman (see Section 19).

10.9 The supervisor is responsible for ensuring that formal review reports are submitted to the Faculty/School Research Students Committee (in accordance with the schedule in 10.3). These reports include comments from the supervisor on the student’s progress to date, including any skills training requirements. The form includes provision for the student to add his or her own comments. In the event that significant differences of opinion are reflected in the report, advice should be sought from the Director of Studies. In the event that the Director of Studies is a member of the student’s supervisory team then advice should be sought from the Head of Department/School.

10.10 The Faculty/School Research Students Committee is responsible for giving appropriate scrutiny to the review report. Where the Committee has concerns these should be referred to the Director of Studies for resolution. Where necessary the Director of Studies should refer to the supervisor and/or student as appropriate. In the event that the Director of Studies is a member of the student’s supervisory team then the Head of Department/School should be consulted instead.

10.11 To help ensure the quality of postgraduate provision across a Department/School, Directors of Studies are expected to undertake annual monitoring of postgraduate research provision. This will include analysis of admission, progression and completion information for postgraduate research students as well as identification of areas of good practice and of any areas of concern. Further information about the principles and process of annual monitoring is available in QA51 Annual Review of Units and Programmes.
11. **MPhil/PhD progression point**

11.1. Confirmation of PhD registration or transfer from MPhil to PhD registration is a significant indicator to a research student and supervisor(s) of the student’s progress and potential.

11.2. All students first registered on an MPhil/PhD programme before 1 October 2012 are required initially to register for the postgraduate degree of Master unless they already hold a Master’s degree which shows adequate evidence of research training (see Regulation 16.5a(ii)). Students first registered on a PhD programme on or after 1 October 2012 are registered in accordance with the provision of Regulation 16.5 (a) (iii); the majority are registered as probationer PhD candidates.

11.3. Candidates are allowed to seek confirmation or transfer of status on a maximum of two occasions. Submission of work to be considered for the first attempt must take place on or before the deadline specified during the process of formal approval of candidature (see section 6 of QA7). Students admitted as probationer PhD candidates will normally be expected to submit work in support of their confirmation as PhD candidates within 12 months of first registration (18 months for part-time students). In the case of students registered on a research degree with a formally assessed taught element, this will be within 12 months of commencing on the research element of the programme. Failure to submit the work by the specified deadline will normally mean the candidate is deemed to have failed the first attempt. If the first attempt is failed, submission of work for the second attempt must take place on or before a further deadline specified by the Board of Examiners, normally within six months of the first attempt. A candidate who fails to submit the work by this deadline will normally be deemed to have failed their second attempt.

11.4. Where a transfer/confirmation decision is being made outside the timing recommended in 11.3 above, the Faculty/School Research Students Committee should set a new time limit and monitor progress at each subsequent meeting.

11.5. In accordance with Regulation 16.5 b (i) and (ii), transfer of registration from MPhil to PhD or confirmation of PhD registration is only permissible on the recommendation to the Faculty/School Research Students Committee of a Progression Board of Examiners consisting of at least two members of academic staff, neither of whom may have been involved in the supervision of the student or have any other specific interest in the outcome of the decision which might bring the impartiality of the examiner into question. In order to recommend transfer/confirmation, the Progression Board of Examiners must submit a written report to the Research Students Committee confirming that the student has:

- been the subject of a written report from the lead supervisor conveying satisfactory progress by the student. The report should include a description of the work, the value of the work completed and the potential displayed by the candidate, confirmation that any skills training agreed during the process of candidature approval has been completed, and should be signed by the person who prepared it; and
- submitted a satisfactory report on the work, together with an outline of the research to be undertaken in the remaining period of registration and a signed declaration that the work is the student’s own, other than where specifically indicated; and
- passed at an appropriate standard an oral examination conducted by the Progression Board of Examiners. The student may be required to give a presentation as part of the oral examination. The supervisor(s) may attend the oral examination by invitation of the candidate or the panel (by permission of the candidate).

11.6. In accordance with Regulation 16, and depending on whether the candidate was initially admitted to probationer PhD registration, or to MPhil registration, and on whether the progression attempt is the first or second, the Progression Board of Examiners has a range of recommendations open to it:

- the student’s registration for the degree of PhD be confirmed;
• the student’s registration for the degree of Master of Philosophy be confirmed;
• the student be required to make a second submission for transfer/confirmation of registration;
• the student be required to withdraw.

11.7. The recommendation is considered by the Faculty/School Research Students Committee (or the Chair of the Committee acting under delegated powers) and a further recommendation made to the Faculty/School Board of Studies.

11.8. Procedures relating to allegations of plagiarism and other assessment offences during the MPhil/PhD transfer process are set out in QA53 Examination and Assessment Offences, section 7.

11.9. Progression arrangements from one stage to another within professional doctorates are set out in the specific programme regulations.

11.10. Procedures for requesting an academic review of the outcome of the progression examination process are set out in Regulation 17.

11.11. Students whose registration has been transferred from probationer PhD to MPhil may not subsequently seek to transfer from MPhil to PhD candidature.

11.12. Further guidance about the confirmation/transfer process is given in Appendix 5.

12. Preparation of a Thesis for Submission

12.1. Guidance about the format of the thesis, portfolio or other work to be assessed for the award of a research degree (excluding the taught elements of Professional Doctorates) is given in Regulation 16.1 and in the University Specification for Higher Degree Theses. Additional guidance may be available in programme regulations for the particular degree.

12.2. The student is responsible for:
• ensuring that any reports and the final thesis for presentation to the supervisor(s) have been prepared in a professional manner with the correct use of English (or, for students in the Department of Politics, Languages and International Studies, a foreign language as set out in Regulation 16.1e(ii));
• preparing the thesis for formal submission and ensuring that it conforms to the format required by the University (as set out in the Specification for Higher Degree Theses). Students can seek additional guidance on the structure of the thesis and on the presentation of tables, references, figures etc. from their supervisor;
• deciding when submission is to be made (subject to the constraints of the Regulation for the particular degree, and before the date of expiry of the student’s registration), taking due account of the supervisor’s opinion. The supervisor’s agreement to a submission should not be taken as an indication that the Examiners will find the thesis acceptable for the award of a degree;
• providing written certification that the work presented in the thesis is the student’s own, other than where specifically indicated.

12.3. The lead supervisor is responsible for a critical reading of the draft thesis. On the request of the student, the lead supervisor should read a complete draft of the thesis and advise the student of any changes or additions that should be made prior to submission. The student should give the supervisor as much notice as possible (not less than two weeks) of submission of the draft thesis and at least six weeks for reading the draft thesis. The supervisor’s opinion is only advisory and the student has the right to decide when (subject to the requirements of the Regulations for the degree for which the student is registered) to
submit and if to follow the advice of the supervisor.

12.4. The process for the formal submission of a thesis is detailed in University Regulation 16.1e.

13. The Board of Examiners for the award

13.1 The University is committed to fair and consistent examination processes. It seeks to achieve this by:

- providing clear information about examination processes to both students and Examiners;
- incorporating into the role of the External Examiner an explicit expectation that the External Examiner will monitor and report upon the fair and consistent treatment of students.

13.2 Roles of the Examiners

13.2.1 The role of the External Examiner is to:

- examine the candidate’s suitability for the award of the higher degree in question;
- enable the University to ensure that its degrees are comparable in standard with those awarded by other universities in the United Kingdom in similar subjects;
- verify that the standards expected of successful candidates are appropriate for the level of the award;
- monitor and report on the proceedings of the Board of Examiners and in particular on whether these ensure that students are treated fairly and consistently.

13.2.2 The role of the Internal Examiner is to:

- examine the candidate’s suitability for the award of the higher degree in question;
- ensure that the examination is conducted in accordance with the University’s Regulations and Quality Assurance procedures;
- verify that the standards expected of successful candidates are appropriate for the level of the award.

Examiners for the professional doctorates should follow any additional roles and responsibilities set out in the specific programme regulations.

13.3 A Board of Examiners for a research student will normally comprise at least one internal and one external examiner. Regulation 16. It sets out the requirements for constituting Boards of Examiners for the various postgraduate research degree programmes.

13.4 Information on the examination of taught elements of professional doctorates is available in QA12 External Examining (Taught Provision), QA28 Conduct of Examinations and QA35 Assessment Procedures for Programmes not compliant with NFAAR.

13.5 Members of the supervisory team will not normally be present at a viva voce examination, unless the student notifies the Director of Studies that they wish a member of the supervisory team to attend. A member of the supervisory team who has been permitted to attend a viva voce examination may neither be a member of the Board of Examiners nor take any active part in the viva voce examination.

13.6 It is the responsibility of the Head of Department/School or Director of Studies, after consultation with the supervisor(s), to recommend appropriately qualified individuals in accordance with the criteria set out in Section 14, to the Board of Studies for appointment to the Board of Examiners for the thesis. The Head of Department/School or Director of Studies should complete the Appointment of Examiners form when nominating individuals.
13.7 The Board of Studies will consider the appointment of an External Examiner on the basis of documentary evidence which demonstrates that the nominee has fulfilled the criteria outlined in Section 14. The Board of Studies minutes should record the qualifications and current employment of the proposed External Examiner.

13.8 Senate is responsible for formally confirming the appointment of appropriately qualified individuals.

13.9 Following appointment by the Board of Studies the Secretary to the Board will advise Human Resources of the appointment.

13.10 Human Resources is responsible for:
- issuing a letter of appointment to all Examiners, together with the Guidelines for Examiners for the degrees being examined (the Guidelines for Examiners including extracts from the University Regulations, this QA Code of Practice statement and the Equal Opportunities for Students Policy Statement);
- forwarding a copy of the appointment letter to the appropriate Graduate School and to the Vice-Chancellor’s Office;
- determining the fees for External Examiners.

13.11 Following appointment of the Examiners the Head of Department/School is responsible for ensuring that the following is sent to each of the Examiners:
- the thesis to be examined;
- the document ‘Guidelines for Examiners’;
- the composition of the Board of Examiners;
- report form and pre-viva report form;
- External Examiners only: expense claim form and a list of reimbursable expense limits.

13.12 Departments/the School are responsible for the authorisation of the payment of expense claims. Departments/School are also responsible for the authorisation of the payment of External Examiners on completion of their duties.

14. Criteria for the Appointment of Examiners

14.1 The criteria for the appointment of Examiners set out in this section relate to the degrees of MPhil, PhD and EdD. Examiners for the degrees of DBA, EngD, DClinPsy and DHealth must meet the criteria set out in the specific programme regulations.

14.2 Each Examiner of a research degree should normally be required to meet at least two of the following criteria, and the Board of Examiners as a whole must meet all three criteria:
- that s/he should hold the degree for which they are examining or equivalent;
- that s/he should have recent experience of successfully supervising students to graduation at an equivalent level to that being examined;
- that s/he should have recent experience of examining students at an equivalent level to that being examined in the relevant subject area.

External Examiners for the award

14.3 It is recognised that in exceptional cases, the most suitable person to act as an External Examiner for a particular research candidate might be, for example, an industrialist who has ample experience of examining research degrees, but has neither a PhD nor experience of supervising research students. In such cases, the Board of Studies must receive as much supporting evidence as possible of the individual’s suitability for the position including a full CV. Particular attention must be paid to the additional support needs of these potential Examiners.
14.4 Appointment of retired academics is permissible but should not normally take place more than three years after the date of retirement. Retired academics should provide evidence of their recent work in the field, for example recently published material.

14.5 An External Examiner will not be a former student or a former member of staff of the University of Bath unless there has been a lapse of at least five years before the start of the date of appointment as an examiner.

14.6 External Examiners should have no existing, or prior, connection with the University or student that would call into question their ability to exercise objective, impartial and independent judgements.

14.7 Where there appears to be a case for appointing an External Examiner who does not meet exactly the requirements outlined above, advice must be sought from the Graduate Schools/Graduate Division or the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Office.

**Internal Examiners for the award**

14.8 Anyone who has taken a significant or recent supervisory role in the student’s research may not be appointed as an Examiner.

14.9 In exceptional circumstances when no suitable Internal Examiner is available, a second External Examiner will be appointed. Advice on this should be sought from the Graduate Schools/Graduate Division or the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Office.

15. **Pre Viva Report**

15.1 All Examiners are required to complete independently and submit the Pre-Viva Report Form at least one week before the viva voce examination is due to take place. It is the responsibility of the Director of Studies to ensure that the completed forms have been submitted to the appropriate person within the Department/School. This form must be completed for all research submissions even if, as permitted by Regulation 16.3 (m) for the award of MPhil, the Examiners do not require a viva voce examination. If the Director of Studies is an Examiner, the forms should be submitted to the Head of Department/School.

15.2 Examiners should note that, in accordance with Data Protection legislation, Pre-Viva Report Forms may be made available upon request to the candidate after the viva voce examination has taken place.

16. **Procedure for a Viva Voce Examination**

16.1 A viva voce examination is required in all cases except where the candidate has submitted a thesis for the degree of MPhil where a viva voce examination is at the discretion of the Board of Examiners (see Regulation 16.3m). In cases where, in accordance with Regulation 16.3(m), the Examiners agree that a viva voce examination is not required and do not therefore meet each other, they should make arrangements to ensure that the comments on the Examiner’s Report Form represent fully and accurately the views of all the Examiners.

16.2 The viva voce examination should normally take place within three months of the submission of the thesis. The candidate must be advised of the date of the viva voce examination as soon as possible after the thesis has been submitted. As a minimum, the candidate must be given at least one week’s notice of the date of the viva voce examination.

16.3 The venue for the viva voce examination should be appropriate. In particular, consideration should be given to providing a quiet, comfortable environment free from interruptions. It is
expected that viva voce examinations will be held at the University of Bath. Where there
appears to be a compelling case for holding the examination elsewhere, advice should be
sought from the Assistant Registrar (Examinations & Ceremonies), Student Records and
Examinations Office.

16.4 It is the student’s responsibility to bring forward, at the earliest opportunity, details of any
reasonable adjustments they may require to enable them to participate fully in a viva voce
examination. The University is responsible for ensuring that appropriate facilities are made
available in such circumstances.

16.5 Video conferencing facilities may be used in viva voce examinations only when either an
examiner or the candidate is based at such a distance from the University (normally outside
the UK) that s/he is not able, for reasons of prohibitively high cost, difficulties of time or
restricted mobility, to travel to the University of Bath in order to conduct or participate in a
viva voce examination at an appropriate time. The option of video conferencing should not
normally be made available solely for the reasons that the candidate has left Bath after
submitting a thesis and does not wish to return to the University for the viva voce
examination. Details about the procedures for video conferencing are available in Appendix
3. If the use of video conferencing is being considered for a viva voce examination, advice
should first be sought in good time from the Graduate School.

17. **Outcomes of a Viva Voce Examination**

17.1 In accordance with Regulation 16 the Board of Examiners has a range of recommendations
open to it:
- award of degree (with no corrections required);
- award of degree subject to satisfactory completion of minor corrections, consisting of
  predominantly trivial or typographical errors;
- award of degree subject to satisfactory completion of minor corrections, consisting of
  more significant or substantial corrections, but which do not alter the substance of the
  thesis in any significant or fundamental manner and therefore do not require major
  reworking or reinterpretation of the intellectual content of the thesis;
- that a revised thesis must be submitted before recommendation of the award can be
  considered: in the case of PhD and EngD the Examiners may also offer the candidate
  the opportunity to accept the degree of MPhil;
- award of a lower degree (MPhil) (PhD, EdD and EngD only);
- fail (with no opportunity for resubmission).

17.2 The lead supervisor (or a member of the supervisory team) will be available for consultation
with the Board of Examiners at the time of the viva voce examination and should be in
attendance when the candidate is informed verbally of the Examiners’ recommendations.

17.3 All Examiners must be present when the candidate is informed verbally of the
recommendation following the viva voce examination. It should be made clear to the
candidate that the oral communication has no authoritative significance until the
recommendation of the Examiners has been approved by the Board of Studies.

17.4 Following the viva voce examination, the Board of Examiners should complete the
appropriate Examiners’ Report Form, which summarises its deliberations and
recommendations to the Board of Studies. In accordance with Data Protection legislation
the Examiners’ Report Form may be made available to the candidate after the viva voce
examination has taken place.

17.5 It is the responsibility of the Director of Studies to ensure that the Examiners provide for the
candidate and the lead supervisor clear written notification of:
  i) the Examiners’ unconfirmed recommendation, and
ii) the details of the additional work, if any, required
iii) the deadline for the completion of any required additional work

as soon as possible after the viva voce examination, and in no case more than two weeks later. In this written notification, it should be made clear that the decision of the Board of Examiners has the status of an unconfirmed recommendation to the Board of Studies.

17.6 Award of degree with no corrections: Where the approval of an award is recommended with no corrections required, the Board of Examiners’ recommendation can then be submitted to the Board of Studies. Subject to confirmation that the final version of the thesis has been deposited with the Library in accordance with University Regulations, the Board of Studies will approve the award under delegated powers of Senate. The candidate will be formally notified in writing of the decision of the Board of Studies by the Secretary to the Board of Studies.

17.7 Minor corrections (trivial or typographical): Where approval of an award is recommended subject to minor (trivial or typographical) corrections, the initial recommendation of the Board of Examiners does not require confirmation from the Board of Studies. The candidate will not normally be allowed more than 30 days from the date of receiving written notification to complete these corrections. Exceptionally, the Chair of the Board of Studies may allow the candidate a short extension to the 30 day period. The satisfactory completion of the corrections must be signed off by at least one member of the Board of Examiners. The Internal Examiner is expected to submit to the Board of Studies the completed Examiners’ Report Form, indicating whether the corrections have been carried out satisfactorily, within 30 days of the candidate having submitted the corrected thesis. Subject to confirmation that the final version of the thesis has been deposited with the Library in accordance with University Regulations, the Board of Studies will approve the award under delegated powers of Senate. The candidate will be formally notified in writing of the decision of the Board of Studies by the Secretary to the Board of Studies.

17.8 Minor corrections (significant or substantial): Where approval of an award is recommended subject to more significant corrections, the initial recommendation of the Board of Examiners should be formally approved by the Board of Studies, or the Chair acting on its behalf. The candidate will not normally be allowed more than 12 weeks from the formal approval of the initial recommendation to complete the corrections. The satisfactory completion of the corrections must be signed off by at least one member of the Board of Examiners. The Internal Examiner is expected to submit to the Board of Studies the completed Examiners’ Report Form, indicating whether the corrections have been carried out satisfactorily, within 30 days of the candidate having submitted the corrected thesis. Subject to confirmation that the final version of the thesis has been deposited with the Library in accordance with University Regulations, the Board of Studies will approve the award under delegated powers of Senate. It is essential that the full Board of Studies take a part in approving the award of the degree either at the stage of formally approving the initial recommendation of the Board of Examiners or at the stage of formally approving the award. The candidate will be formally notified in writing of the decision of the Board of Studies by the Secretary to the Board of Studies.

17.9 Revised Thesis: Where a candidate is required to submit a revised thesis, the Examiners must complete Part II of the Examiners’ Report Form, indicating the date by which the revised thesis must be submitted and which of the Examiners will be responsible for examination of the revised thesis. The Examiners’ recommendation and completed form must be submitted to the Board of Studies for approval. The Board of Examiners may reserve the right to wait until after the revised thesis has been submitted and reviewed to decide whether a second viva voce examination is necessary. Once the revised thesis has been examined, the completed Examiners’ Report Form, together with a report signed by the Examiners (as indicated in paragraph 2(b) of Part II of the Examiners’ Report Form)
confirming whether or not the revisions specified have been carried out satisfactorily, should be submitted to the Board of Studies as soon as possible after the examination process has been completed. Subject to the satisfactory completion of the specified revisions and confirmation that the final version of the thesis has been deposited with the Library in accordance with University Regulations, the Board of Studies will approve the award under delegated powers of Senate. The candidate will be formally notified in writing of the decision of the Board of Studies by the Secretary to the Board of Studies.

17.10 *Fail*: The Examiners’ recommendation and completed form must be submitted to the Board of Studies for approval. The candidate will be formally notified in writing of the decision of the Board of Studies by the Secretary to the Board of Studies.

17.11 Boards of Studies will regularly scrutinise External Examiner comments on the examination process and take appropriate action in light of these comments.

17.12 As noted in Section 19, procedures for requesting for an academic review of the outcome of the examination process are set out in Regulation 17.

18. **Student Feedback and Liaison**

18.1 The University is committed to providing students with opportunities to contribute to the ongoing process of enhancement of the student experience through a range of feedback and liaison mechanisms, both formal and informal, with which postgraduate research students are encouraged to engage.

18.2 The Learning and Teaching Enhancement Office is responsible for conducting the Higher Education Academy’s bi-annual Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES). The results of the PRES will be considered by the University Research Students Committee and Faculty/School Research Students Committees. It is the responsibility of the University Research Students Committee to ensure that feedback is provided, as appropriate, to Faculties/School, and via Faculties/School to students on issues identified in the survey and/or actions taken in response to issues raised.

18.3 The Learning, Teaching and Enhancement Office is responsible for arranging other surveys of the learning experience of research students. The results of these surveys will be considered by the University Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee and the University Research Students Committee/Faculty/School Research Student Committees. Other opportunities for research students to provide feedback include externally administered surveys. It is the responsibility of the University Learning, Teaching and Quality Committee to ensure that feedback is provided, as appropriate, to Faculties/Schools and to students, on issues identified in the internal or external surveys and/or actions taken in response to issues raised.

18.4 The Postgraduate Association encourages postgraduate research students to participate in both academic and social activity across Departmental, School and Faculty boundaries. It is a formally recognised section of the Students’ Union and sends a representative to key University committees.

18.5 Postgraduate research students are encouraged to participate in faculty Staff/Student Liaison Committees (SSLCs) to represent the views of students and provide a two-way channel of communication with the University. The requirement for SSLCs to produce an Annual Report on their activities is outlined in QA48 Annex A Staff/Student Liaison Committees. The Students’ Union is responsible for collating an overview report that draws out institutional themes, for consideration by the University Research Students Committee (for themes of relevance to research programmes) at the committee’s first meeting of the academic year.
19 Annual Monitoring of Research Degree Provision

19.1 The University is committed to the regular evaluation of its research degree provision in order to:
   • maintain the quality and validity of its provision;
   • facilitate continuous enhancement of provision to reflect developments in the sector, institution and discipline;
   • record the quality and standards of its provision.

19.2 To help ensure the quality of postgraduate provision across a Department/School, Directors of Studies are expected to undertake annual monitoring of postgraduate research provision, and to present these reports to the Faculty/School Research Students Committee and University Research Students Committee. The template for the report is available as Appendix 4 Under the guidance of Associate Deans (Graduate Students) Directors of Studies are also expected to ensure that actions agreed by the Faculty/School Research Students Committee and the University Research Students Committee are completed.

19.3 Annual Monitoring: The University recognises that the process of evaluation and enhancement of research degree provision is iterative and happens through a range of formal and informal mechanisms. Annual monitoring provides Departments/School with a defined opportunity to take a holistic view of their research degree provision and the environment in which it occurs, reflecting upon a range of evidence and indicators in order to identify actions to be taken and report on progress being made.

19.4 Annual monitoring reports should be concise, evidence-based and evaluative. The report should include commentary on/evaluation of statistical data (provided by the Student Records and Examinations Office) on PGR admissions, registrations, confirmations and/or transfers to PhD and completion rates, First Destinations data (provided by the Careers Service), data from the PRES if applicable to the year of the report, and data from the Directors of Studies including feedback from External Examiners, and reference to action taken as a result of points raised in previous annual monitoring reports. The Directors of Studies should highlight any issues that have arisen over the preceding year, and propose action where necessary and include a summary of any issues and good practice with a wider impact, to be raised at School/Faculty or institutional level.

19.5 The Faculty/School Research Students Committee is responsible for considering annual monitoring reports at its December meeting, and for referring them, together with any recommendations, to the January meeting of University Research Students Committee. The aim of undertaking scrutiny of annual monitoring reports for research degrees at Faculty/School and institutional level is to:
   • ensure accountability for action plans and issues for concern;
   • incorporate an element of peer review into the annual monitoring process;
   • offer an opportunity for wider themes to be highlighted at institutional level;
   • promote enhancement and to disseminate good practice across the University.

19.6 Completion rate data: University Research Students Committee considers summarised data compiled by the Student Records and Examinations Office, including forecast information, on completion rates at its January meeting. After consideration by University Research Students Committee Associate Deans (Graduate Students) work with PGR Directors of Studies to ensure that the data are considered in detail and any action specified by University Research Students Committee is carried out.

20 Staff Development and Training

20.1 The University is committed to providing postgraduate research students with effective
supervision and recognises that in order to achieve this, staff who are members of supervisory teams must be appropriately trained for their roles.

20.2 The Academic Staff Development team in the Learning and Teaching Enhancement Office and the Assistant Registrar (Examinations & Ceremonies) are responsible for working together to consider and provide opportunities for appropriate training for staff involved in supporting postgraduate research students. Departments/Schools are responsible for ensuring that their staff involved in supporting postgraduate research students are adequately prepared and trained for their roles.

20.3 All staff on the University payroll who are new to supervision are required to attend a University intensive programme on supervision either prior to or within six months of assuming supervisory responsibility.

21 Complaints and Reviews

21.1 The University’s principles on which student complaints are dealt with are outlined in the [Student Complaints Procedure](#).

21.2 Part of the aim of approving the candidature of a student and establishing a clear programme of work at an early stage in a postgraduate research student’s studies is to build a constructive relationship between the student and their supervisor. This should help to avoid problems or assist in their early identification and resolution. However, it is recognised that problems can occur during a postgraduate research student’s registration and the University has mechanisms in place to deal with such situations.

21.3 Usually problems with postgraduate supervision can be resolved at Department/School level either by consultation with the Director of Studies or the Head of Department/School. However, for cases where this appears to be ineffective or where the student considers this route inappropriate or inadvisable, the University's Research Postgraduate Ombudsman should be contacted.

Consultations are treated in strict confidence and staff from the Department/School in question are only contacted by the Research Postgraduate Ombudsman at the request of the research student.

21.4 In accordance with the University's [Policy on Personal and Professional Relationships](#) supervisory staff are strongly advised not to enter into a personal relationship with a student. Where a personal relationship exists, it is the responsibility of the member of staff concerned to declare the relationship.

21.5 Procedures for requesting an Academic Review of the outcome of the examination process are set out in [Regulation 17](#).

22 Declaration of Interests

22.1 Students, members of the supervisory team and potential Examiners are advised to be aware of other potential conflicts of interest and where possible to avoid entering into any kind of relationship that may create a potential conflict of interest, for example:

- situations unrelated to the academic work conducted by the student, such as the establishment of a financial relationship arising between a member of the supervisory team or examiner and the student, for example, but not limited to, situations in which one party is the landlord of a property inhabited by the other; or where money is lent or borrowed;

- situations in which the student is asked to conduct paid or unpaid academic or other work unrelated to the area of research for which s/he is registered, for a member of the
supervisory team or examiner.

Where either party has concerns that there may be a conflict of interests, the concerned party is responsible for informing the Director of Studies, Head of Department/School or Dean of the existence of that relationship without delay.

22.2 Any such disclosure relating to personal or other relationships will be treated sensitively and in strict confidence. The person to whom such a disclosure is made is responsible for ensuring, where necessary, that appropriate alternative arrangements are made with respect to the student's admission, assessment, supervision, teaching and/or pastoral care.
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- QA11 v1.8, Examination of Research Degrees
- QA50 v1.0, Appointment of External Examiners for Research Degrees
- QA53 Examination and Assessment Offences, Section 9.
- QAA Code of Practice, Section 1 - Postgraduate Research Programmes, September 2004
- Related Documentation: QAA Quality Code Chapter B11: Research Degrees, Vitae Researcher Development Framework
- Author: Quality Enhancement Officer, LTEO
**Appendix 1: Supervisory Responsibilities**

It is important that a clear understanding is established at an early stage between the supervisor(s) and the student about the responsibilities of each. This list summarises the main responsibilities of the lead supervisor and supervisory team towards the student. The additional administrative responsibilities arising from supervision are set out in the body of QA7.

**In summary:**
- Lead Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that their research student progresses satisfactorily and in accordance with the University’s Regulations and Quality Assurance principles;
- Supervisory Teams are responsible for ensuring that their research student receives appropriate guidance and support throughout their registration with the University.

The lead supervisor is responsible for:
- ensuring that all the arrangements and information required for the approval of candidature are in place as soon as possible after a student has registered;
- analysing, discussing and monitoring a student’s requirements for skills training, including generic skills training, and personal development;
- ensuring that formal review reports are submitted to the Faculty/School Research Students Committee as required;
- reporting the finalised thesis title to the Faculty/School Research Students Committee as soon as possible and before the Board of Examiners is appointed.

The lead supervisor is also responsible for ensuring that the supervisory team:
- gives guidance about the nature of research and the standard expected, about literature and sources, and the writing of reports and the thesis;
- draws the student’s attention to plagiarism awareness training available within the University, and to the nature, unacceptability and consequences of plagiarism;
- gives guidance about other research related issues, such as safety and ethics;
- maintains appropriate contact with a student through regular formal and informal meetings;
- is accessible to the student at other appropriate times when a student needs advice;
- gives advice on planning the research programme, and the completion dates of successive stages of the work so that the whole may be submitted within the scheduled time;
- requests written work as appropriate, and returns such work with appropriate feedback and constructive criticism within a reasonable time;
- arranges for the student to talk about their work to staff or graduate seminars, and to have practice in oral presentations;
- ensures, especially during the first year of study, that the student is made aware and is notified in writing of inadequate progress or of standards of work below that generally expected;
- ensures an appropriate written record is kept of meetings with the student, including advice or instructions given to them and agreed actions, and that a copy of all correspondence about academic requirements, inadequate progress etc, is kept;
- undertakes a critical reading of the draft thesis and provides feedback to the student, including advice on the potential submission of a final thesis;
- ensures additional support, if necessary, for overseas students who may need more advice (including arrangements for assistance with language difficulties), particularly in the early stages of their work;
- arranges appropriate support for students with disabilities, seeking advice from the Student Disability Advice Team as necessary;
- attends relevant supervisory training as coordinated by the University;
- actively engages with the research environment of the Department/School.
Appendix 2: The Responsibilities of Postgraduate Research Students

It is important that a clear understanding is established at an early stage between the supervisor(s) and a student about the responsibilities of each. This list summarises the main responsibilities of postgraduate research students. The body of QA7 should be referred to for further details of these responsibilities.

In summary, postgraduate research students are responsible for undertaking research; undertaking appropriate skills training; maintaining the progress of their work; taking the initiative in raising problems or difficulties; and deciding when to submit their thesis, within the constraints of the University’s Regulations.

The postgraduate research student is responsible for:
- attending Induction Sessions, both institutional and Departmental/School and for familiarising him or herself with relevant induction documentation such as the PG Student Handbook, University of Bath Regulations and relevant QA Code of Practice statements.
- discussing their training, including generic skills training, and personal development needs and attending relevant training as agreed with their lead supervisor.
- discussing with their supervisor(s) the type of guidance and comment found to be most helpful.
- maintaining appropriate contact with their supervisor(s) through regular formal and informal meetings.
- ensuring that an appropriate written record is kept of meetings with their supervisor(s), including advice or instructions received and agreed actions.
- taking the initiative in raising problems or difficulties, however elementary they may seem, particularly in the early stages of the research, and particularly in relation to the expectations about achievements and progress of the research.
- maintaining the progress of the work in accordance with the stages agreed with their supervisor(s), including the presentation of written material as required in sufficient time to allow for comments and discussion before proceeding to the next stage.
- ensuring that their research work is original and undertaken independently. Wherever another author’s work is referred to or used a student is responsible for ensuring appropriate acknowledgement of that work.
- ensuring that any reports and the final thesis presented to the supervisor(s) have been prepared in a professional manner with the correct use of English (or, for students in the Department of European Studies and Modern Languages, a foreign language as set out in Regulation 16.1e(ii)) and ensuring that the final thesis conforms to the format required by the University.
- deciding when submission of the final thesis is to be made, within the constraints of the University Regulations, and taking due account of the supervisors’ opinion.
- contributing to the research environment of the Department/School in which they are based.
Appendix 3: Use of Video Conferencing in Viva Voce Examinations

Video conferencing facilities may be used in viva voce examinations only when either an examiner or the candidate is based at such a distance from the University (normally outside the UK) that s/he is not able, for reasons of prohibitively high cost, difficulties of time or restricted mobility, to travel to the University of Bath in order to conduct or participate in a viva voce examination at an appropriate time. The option of video conferencing should not normally be made available solely for the reasons that the candidate has left Bath after submitting a thesis and does not wish to return to the University for the viva voce examination.

Procedures for using video conferencing in viva voce examinations:

a) Advice should be sought, in the first instance, from the Graduate Office;
b) Video conferencing may be used only with the written agreement of the candidate and all proposed members of the Board of Examiners. This agreement should be sought and confirmed prior to the proposal being considered by the Board of Studies;
c) The Board of Studies should be informed at the time of the appointment of the Board of Examiners of the intention to use video conferencing facilities in the viva voce examination. The Board of Studies has the right to request further information in relation to a proposal to use video conferencing or to refuse a request where it feels a strong enough case has not been made. The decision of the Board of Studies is final;
d) The lead supervisor is responsible for ensuring that all parties involved in the examination are informed of the details of the arrangements;
e) Any time differences between the two locations must be taken into account to ensure that the candidate is not disadvantaged by an examination taking place at an inappropriate time;
f) When arranging video conferencing the quality of the equipment used should be taken into account. Sessions will automatically default to the lowest common denominator (ie. ISDN6 based equipment at one site will provide a high quality output, but if the remote end has only ISDN2 capability the quality will default to the lower configuration). A session where one end is using PC-based desktop equipment with a modem should not be considered. Contingency plans are essential in the event of technology failure;
g) The candidate must be given the opportunity to practice speaking to another party using the facilities in advance of the viva voce examination;
h) The candidate should normally be located in the University of Bath and accompanied by the internal examiner;
i) Where the candidate is the remote party, any materials brought into the conference should be identified at the start of the examination and visible throughout. The University will not normally permit any person to be present with the candidate other than technical staff involved in the use of video conferencing facilities;
j) Examinations will not be recorded;
k) The set-up of the conference facilities should be such that the person/people at each end of the link should be able to see the other person/people present at all times;
l) When concluding a viva voce examination which has involved video conferencing, all participants should be asked to confirm that the holding of the examination by video conference has had no substantive bearing on the examination process. Examiners will be invited to comment on the conduct of the viva voce examination using the standard examiner’s report form and should refer explicitly to the use of video conferencing;
m) Requests for academic review will be considered, and where appropriate conducted, under the University’s standard procedures. Having agreed to a viva voce examination involving video conferencing the candidate will not be permitted to use this as grounds for appeal, unless the circumstances of technical failure or other unforeseen eventualities beyond the control of the Board of Examiners were deemed to have adversely affected the candidate’s performance.
### Appendix 4

**Annual Monitoring of Programmes**  
**Postgraduate Research Report Template**

This form should be submitted to your Departmental/School PGR Committee and then to the Faculty Research Students Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TITLE OF ALL RESEARCH PROGRAMME(S) COVERED BY THE REPORT:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERIOD COVERED BY THE REPORT:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. **ANALYSIS OF CURRENT DEMAND FOR AND RECRUITMENT TO THE PROGRAMME(S)**  
*(Table 1 data)*  
Director of Studies’ comments on localised recruitment activities such as brochures, advertising, visits, attendance at recruitment fairs etc.; strategies for increasing student numbers:

2. **STUDENT RETENTION/SUCCESS RATE**  
*(Table 2 data showing total numbers of registrations and numbers of leavers, split into successful (graduating) and unsuccessful leavers)*  
Director of Studies’ comments (including comments on relative numbers of first time passes, passes after corrections and passes after submission of revised theses *(in future this information will be provided by the Graduate Office, but it is not yet held on SAMIS).*  
**PLEASE DO NOT NAME INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS IN THIS SECTION:**

3. **RESEARCH STUDENT ACHIEVEMENTS/RECOGNITION**  
Please list any especially notable prizes, awards or other distinctions achieved by research students within the Department/School during the year; prestigious publications, conference presentations or posters, overseas visits by students:

4. **SUMMARY OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FUNDING FOR RESEARCH STUDENTS**  
*(Table 3 data)*  
Director of Studies’ comments  
**PLEASE DO NOT NAME INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS IN THIS SECTION:**
5. **GENERAL COMMENTS ON ANY OF THE ABOVE**

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6. **SUMMARY OF STUDENT PROGRESS REPORTS**
   Analysis of issues raised (e.g. Transfer timing, Masters exit awards, poor progress) and, action proposed/taken as a result.
   **PLEASE DO NOT NAME INDIVIDUAL STUDENTS IN THIS SECTION.**

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7. **EXTERNAL EXAMINER GENERIC COMMENTS (FORM EX5 – AVAILABLE IN DEPARTMENT/FACULTY OFFICE)**
   Analysis of issues raised (e.g. quality of theses), action proposed or taken as a result

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8. **FEEDBACK FROM CURRENT STUDENTS**
   **DIRECTORS OF STUDIES’ COMMENTS**

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9. **GRADUATE STUDENT DESTINATIONS**
   (Note: 2011-12 graduate data previously provided to DoS by Careers Service, available at [https://wiki.bath.ac.uk/display/dlhe/Home](https://wiki.bath.ac.uk/display/dlhe/Home) More recent information not yet available centrally).
   **DIRECTOR OF STUDIES’ COMMENTS:**

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10. **SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH STUDENTS**
    Generic Skills Training provision other than central provision; other forms of departmental/school training provision; seminar programme.

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11. **SUMMARY OF ACTIONS TAKEN IN RESPONSE TO POINTS RAISED AND PLANS FOR THE COMING YEAR AS DETAILED IN THE PREVIOUS REPORT**

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12. **PLANS FOR THE COMING YEAR**
    Please describe any plans in place for improving recruitment to and/or the student experience on research degree programmes in your Department/School.

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13. **ANY OTHER COMMENTS**
    This might include reference to facilities available to students
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIGNATURE OF DIRECTOR OF STUDIES:</th>
<th>DATE:</th>
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Appendix 5

PhD transfer/confirmation

Regulation 16 requires all PhD students, whether they are registered in the first instance for MPhil, or as probationer PhD students to 'submit a satisfactory report' and to 'pass an oral examination conducted by a Progression Board of Examiners established for this purpose by the Board of Studies'.

The nature of your research will obviously determine the kinds of questions and issues which will arise in the course of your PhD transfer/confirmation, and your supervisor(s) will advise you, but here are some guidelines to have in mind when preparing your transfer/confirmation report:

- Clearly state the research question(s) to be addressed (this may be in the form of a hypothesis to be tested), their purpose, and why they are important.
- In the oral examination: be able to articulate your aims and defend them.
- Provide a succinct background to the topic that gives the context for the research question, based on published literature, including up to date citations where appropriate.
- In the oral examination: be able to expand on the background presented.
- Document methodology employed or to be employed, link it to the research question(s), and explain how the chosen approach will provide appropriate data to answer the question(s).
- In the oral examination: be able to explain the basis of the methodology and to give examples of its previous utilisation. If you have done a case study, be ready to explain what kind of case study it is, the sampling, and applicability of findings in the context of the contribution to knowledge your work will make. Students in Humanities & Social Sciences and the School of Management using mixed methods should explain how they will be negotiated.
- Present some primary data and demonstrate, where appropriate, how these are manipulated and interpreted.
- In the oral examination: be able to defend the experimental design and data handling and/or interpretation (including the application of appropriate statistical tests if relevant) Critically evaluate work undertaken to date against the background literature.
- In the oral examination: be able to address the impact and limitations of the data. Include a substantial plan of future work, building on results to date or developing alternative approaches. Timelines may be included.
- In the oral examination: be able to discuss these plans knowledgeably and without waffle. Include an appropriate list of references.
- In the oral examination: be able to demonstrate knowledge of the contents of key cited papers.

Regulation 16.5 sets out the full range of recommendations available to the Progression Board of Examiners.