

Faculty of Natural Sciences



Postgraduate Research Student Handbook

2020-2021

Contents

FOREWORD	3
Disclaimer	3
WELCOME	4
1. The Research Environment in the Faculty of Natural Sciences	5
1.1 Research Centres and Schools.....	5
1.2 Faculty Research Office and the PGR Committee.....	6
1.3 Faculty and University Research Leadership.....	6
1.4 Useful Contacts	7
2. Roles, Duties and Expectations	9
2.1 Postgraduate Research Student	9
2.2 Supervisory Team	10
2.3 Faculty Postgraduate Research (PGR) Director/Deputy Director.....	12
2.4 Postgraduate Research Lead of the School or Research Centre.....	13
2.5 Faculty Postgraduate Committee	13
2.6 Faculty Postgraduate Student Voice Committee.....	14
2.7 University Committees and Directorates	14
2.8 Keele Postgraduate Association (KPA)	14
3. The Postgraduate Research Experience.....	15
3.1 Induction.....	15
3.2 Resources	15
3.3 Training	15
3.4 Working hours.....	18
3.5 Leave	18
3.6 Work commitments	18
3.7 Personal Development and Learning Plan	18
3.8 Annual and Interim Progress Review.....	19
3.9 Dealing with Unsatisfactory Performance	21
3.10 Continuation and Change of Mode of Attendance	21
3.11 Time Limits, Extensions and Leave of Absence	22
3.12 Preparation and Submission of the Thesis.....	22
3.13 The Viva and Completion.....	24
4. Handling Problems and Exceptional Cases	26
4.1 Academic Misconduct.....	26
4.2 Reporting Concerns with PGR Experience (Student and Supervisor).....	27
4.3 Complaints	27
4.4 Appeals.....	27
4.5 Change of Supervisors	28
4.6 Leave Due to Special Conditions	28
4.7 Withdrawal	28
4.8 Letters and Statements	29
5. Policies and Guidelines	29
A1. FNS Policy on changing the supervisor of PhD students	29
A2. FNS policy on feedback on thesis chapters	31
A3. FNS policy on Admission of PhD Students with Advanced Standing	31
A4. FNS policy on teaching-related work by PhD students	32
A5. FNS Guidelines and form on funding of Researcher Development and Transferable Skills Training.....	34
A6. FNS policy on advertising and filling Studentships.....	39

FOREWORD

The handbook is an important source of information which will be relevant at different stages through your journey as a postgraduate research student at Keele University. Please take the time to read through it and familiarize yourself with the roles, responsibilities, expectations and procedures followed here at Keele.

Despite every effort on our part this handbook is an extensive live document and will no doubt contain errors, omissions and inconsistencies. We would therefore be very grateful to receive your comments and thoughts, be they positive or negative, so that next year's postgraduate students in the Faculty of Natural Sciences may benefit from your input and experience.

This Handbook should be read in conjunction with the [Code of Practice](#) on Postgraduate Research Degrees, the [Keele Doctoral Academy](#) Postgraduate Research Handbook and the [Guidance](#) for Postgraduate Research Students and Staff.

Dr Shailesh Naire
Director of Postgraduate Research, Faculty of Natural Sciences
September 2020

Disclaimer

The information contained in this handbook is as accurate and up-to-date as we can make it. It does not, however, replace the entries regarding rules, regulations and procedures in the University Prospectus and Calendar, which are authoritative statements. It does, however, constitute a supplement to the Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research Degrees. Where, through error or omission, the information contained herein conflicts directly with the Code of Practice or University Regulations, the Regulations and the Code of Practice takes precedence (in this order). The statements on policy in this handbook are provided in good faith. It may however be necessary from time to time to vary courses, procedures and other arrangements.

WELCOME

We are pleased to welcome you to your period of postgraduate research training in the Faculty of Natural Sciences (FNS). We are excited for you to be a part of our diverse multi-disciplinary research community and we hope that you have an intellectually stimulating, rewarding and enjoyable experience during your time here.

The Faculty of Natural Sciences (FNS) is composed of five Schools: Computing and Mathematics; Geography, Geology and the Environment (GGE); Life Sciences; Chemical and Physical Sciences; and Psychology. The research in the Faculty is organised into seven Research Centres: Physics and Astrophysics; Chemical Sciences; Computer Science; Geography, Geology and Environment (GGE); Life Sciences, Mathematics; and Psychology – two of our Schools contain two Research Centres (Computing and Mathematics and Chemical and Physical Sciences).

At this time there are over 170 Postgraduate Research students registered within FNS, distributed throughout the five Schools. In addition to our core Postgraduate mission of providing the facilities and support for successful research and comprehensive training, we also aim to ensure that this wealth of talent and diversity of interest is brought together whenever possible to share ideas and experiences and to form a pool of knowledge and expertise for the benefit of not only all our research students, but also the Faculty and the University as a whole.

This Handbook gives information, advice and guidance that previous students and supervisors have found helpful. It is designed to give you a clear indication of:

- what is required of you and your supervisory team during, and at the end of, your time as a postgraduate student in FNS.
- how the Faculty is organised and administered and the research strengths in the Faculty.
- whom to approach if you have any queries about, or any problems with, your work, your working environment or indeed any aspect of your life in the Faculty.
- the elements of research training, over and above your thesis, that are an integral part of a postgraduate programme;
- the procedures for monitoring research student progress;
- the support and general facilities that are available to you within FNS and the University in general
- general information about the thesis and the viva examination.

We hope that you will enjoy your time working in FNS and succeed in obtaining the higher degree for which you are registered.

Dr Shailesh Naire
Director of Postgraduate Research, Faculty of Natural Sciences
September 2020

1. The Research Environment in the Faculty of Natural Sciences

The Faculty provides for an exceptionally dynamic and stimulating environment for research in natural sciences. Researchers in the Faculty have active collaborations with Universities throughout the UK, and over 35 countries in Europe, USA and the developing world. Basic, strategic and applied research takes place in the highest quality environment, with clear focus and routes into exploitation in bioscience industries and healthcare. The Faculty attracts major research funding from the EPSRC, NERC, BBSRC, MRC and European Union alongside major funding charities such as the Wellcome Trust and the Leverhulme Trust.

1.1 Research Centres and Schools

The Faculty is organised into seven Research Centres and five academic Schools. The Faculty is a centre of excellence with an international reputation for innovative research.

The Research Centres of the Faculty are:

Physics and Astrophysics
Chemical Sciences
Computer Science
Geography, Geology and the Environment (GGE)
Life Sciences
Mathematics
Psychology

The Schools of the Faculty are:

Chemical and Physical Sciences
Computing and Mathematics
Geography, Geology and the Environment (GGE)
Life Sciences
Psychology

The Faculty is home for the Institute of Liberal Arts and Sciences ([ILAS](#)), which offers interdisciplinary degrees, facilitates collaboration across all sciences and supports the Keele Postgraduate Association. The Faculty is also home to the new [Veterinary School](#).

The Faculty hosts two interdisciplinary research centres the Centre for Applied Entomology and Parasitology ([CAEP](#)) and the [Institute for Sustainable Futures](#). Members of the Faculty also participate in other interdisciplinary research centres, for example in ageing research and policing research.

The Faculty hosts the [Student Journal of Natural Sciences \(SJNS\)](#) which is an online, peer reviewed, student journal from Keele University. SJNS welcomes submissions from undergraduate and postgraduate students and publishes articles, literature reviews, case-studies, editorials, letters to the editors and book reviews from any branch of the Natural Sciences.

The Schools provide the office and lab space for postgraduate research students. The Schools manage the ordering and provision of research consumables, provision and maintenance of research equipment, provision and maintenance of appropriate IT equipment (e.g. networked computer), and in many cases they also deal with travel related administration as well for postgraduate research students. The Schools also manage all health and safety issues.

The Research Centres organise the subject specific research environment. Each Centre has a number of research themes around which they organise their research. There are centre and theme

level research meetings, social events (e.g. daily or weekly coffee breaks or tea afternoons), journal clubs, seminar series, postgraduate symposia and other similar events.

1.2 Faculty Research Office and the PGR Committee

The Faculty is responsible for the students' research degree programmes and for monitoring and supporting the progress of students on those programmes. The Faculty has a Postgraduate Research Committee through which it exercises its responsibilities for research degree programmes and students.

The Faculty provides its postgraduate research services to students, supervisors, research centres, schools and the Postgraduate Research Committee through its PGR Committee. This is led by the Postgraduate Research (PGR) Director of the Faculty and supported by the PGR Administrators. The current PGR Director is: Dr Shailesh Naire, the current Deputy PGR Director is: Dr Nicholas Wright, and the current PGR Administrators are: Ms Lisa Cartlidge and Mrs Ann Billington. The PGR Director is also supported by the PGR Leads and PGR Student Representatives in each Research Centre (see Section 1.4: Useful Contacts, for the names of the PGR Leads and Student Representatives in each School).

The PGR Committee operates within the Faculty Research Office which provides all research related services of the Faculty. This is led by the Dean of Research of the Faculty, currently: Professor Clifford Stott.

The PGR Committee manages all postgraduate research related processes. These include dealing with the performance and progression monitoring forms, handling requests for submission deadline changes, mode of attendance changes, leave of absence, change of supervisor, nomination of examiners and dealing with any exceptional cases or situations. The PGR Committee also provides both formal and ad-hoc informal advice to postgraduate students on all study and circumstances related matters. In appropriate cases the PGR Committee puts the student in contact with other relevant services provided within the University or advises on services provided outside of the University. The PGR Committee also monitors the attendance of overseas postgraduate research students, in accordance with the legal obligations of the University.

The PGR Committee, with support from the Faculty Research Office, organises the annual postgraduate research symposium of the Faculty and manages the Researcher Development and Employability Skills Training Fund of the Faculty (see Section 3.3.8 and Annex A5). Operational financial matters related to postgraduate research students are generally dealt with by the Faculty Research Office (unless the relevant School handles these).

1.3 Faculty and University Research Leadership

The head of the Faculty of Natural Sciences is the Executive Dean, currently: Professor Jonathan Wastling, who is also Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Postgraduate Studies. The Dean is supported by the Dean of Research and the Dean of Education, and the Directors of Postgraduate Research and Internationalisation, the Athena Swan Champion and the Faculty Business Manager.

The University is led by the Vice-Chancellor, Professor Trevor McMillan, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Mark Ormerod, the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise, Professor David Amigoni, the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Education, Professor Helen O'Sullivan, the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Students, Dr Anne Loweth and the Deans of the three Faculties, who are also Pro-Vice-Chancellors.

The newly established Keele Doctoral Academy (KDA) provides an overarching support system for all matters relating to postgraduate research students. This includes academic governance, rules and regulations, and co-ordination of the various support systems that can help. The Director of the KDA is Professor Alex Lamont and the KDA Manager is Ms Zara Richards.

The University Research Degrees Committee (RDC) is the exam board for postgraduate research degrees. The Chair of the RDC is Professor Alex Lamont and the University PGR Officer is Ms Laura Grocott.

1.4 Useful Contacts

Executive Dean of the Faculty: Professor Jonathan Wastling

e-mail: dean.naturalsciences@keele.ac.uk
Location: Room 0.06, Science Learning Centre
Telephone: 01782 734583

Dean of Research: Professor Clifford Stott

e-mail: c.stott@keele.ac.uk
Location: Room 1.84, Dorothy Hodgkin Building
Telephone: 01782 734529

Director of Postgraduate Research: Dr Shailesh Naire

e-mail: s.naire@keele.ac.uk
Location: Room 2.19, MacKay Building
Telephone: 01782 733268

Deputy Director of Postgraduate Research: Dr Nicholas Wright

e-mail: n.j.wright@keele.ac.uk
Location: Room 2.03, Lennard Jones Building
Telephone: 01782 734997

Postgraduate Administrator: Ms Lisa Cartlidge

e-mail: l.j.cartlidge@keele.ac.uk
Location: Room 0.09, Science Learning Centre
Telephone: 01782 734331

Postgraduate Administrator: Mrs Ann Billington

e-mail: a.billington@keele.ac.uk
Location: Room 0.15B, Lennard-Jones Building
Telephone: 01782 734071

Doctoral Academy Director: Professor Alex Lamont

KDA@keele.ac.uk

Doctoral Academy Manager: Ms Zara Richards

KDA@keele.ac.uk

University Postgraduate Officer: Ms Laura Grocott

l.k.grocott@keele.ac.uk

Faculty of Natural Sciences PGR Leads of Schools or Research Centres

Astrophysics: e-mail:	Dr Nicholas Wright n.j.wright@keele.ac.uk	Deputy Dr Raphael Hirschi r.hirschi@keele.ac.uk
Chemical Sciences: e-mail:	Dr Alex Radu a.radu@keele.ac.uk	
Computing and Mathematics: e-mail:	Dr Goksel Misirli g.misirli@keele.ac.uk	
GGE: email:	Dr Guido Meinhold g.meinhold@keele.ac.uk	Deputy Dr Ralf Gertisser r.gertisser@keele.ac.uk
Life Sciences: e-mail:	Dr Marcelo Lima m.andrade.de.lima@keele.ac.uk	
Psychology: e-mail:	Dr Masi Noor m.noor@keele.ac.uk	

Faculty of Natural Sciences PGR Student Representatives

Astrophysics: e-mail:	Alexis Quintana Isasi a.l.p.quintana.isasi@keele.ac.uk Edward Black e.j.black@keele.ac.uk
Chemistry: e-mail:	Caecilie Benckendorff c.m.m.benckendorff@keele.ac.uk
Computing: e-mail:	Nathan Brooks n.a.brooks@keele.ac.uk
GGE: e-mail:	Tamsin Fisher t.e.fisher@keele.ac.uk David Whitworth d.w.whitworth@keele.ac.uk
Life Sciences: e-mail:	Taran Kandola t.kandola@keele.ac.uk Emily Pinter e.a.m.pinter@keele.ac.uk
Mathematics e-mail:	Menli Tirkishova m.tirkishova@keele.ac.uk
Psychology e-mail:	Stuart Moore s.b.moore@keele.ac.uk Chloe Pritchard c.a.pritchard@keele.ac.uk

2. Roles, Duties and Expectations

2.1 Postgraduate Research Student

- a) Postgraduate research students are expected to carry out the research project that they agreed to work on. The specification of the project is normally refined during the first year of the project. In exceptional cases the project may change more substantially due to significant change of circumstances (e.g., appointment of a new supervisor for an appropriate reason). Students are responsible to deliver the planned research project according to the research plans and targets.
- b) Students should inform the FNS PGR Administrators and their supervisor about any sponsorship or funding that they receive and about their obligations in relation to such sponsorship and funding, including any obligations about reporting on their performance and progress.
- c) Students should register and enrol when they start their project and at the beginning of every academic year.
- d) Students at the beginning of their first year should register with the Library and the IT services and collect their Keele Card and keys (including any relevant access codes for locks and alarms).
- e) Students should attend the induction events organised by the University, Faculty, Research Centre, School and their supervisor. In case that attendance is impossible due to objective reasons (e.g. event organised before the arrival of the student) the student is expected to access all induction related materials provided them.
- f) Students should familiarise themselves with relevant University Regulations ([C10](#) in particular), the Keele University [Code of Practice](#) on Postgraduate Research Degrees, the KDA Handbook and the PGR [Guidance and Forms](#).
- g) Students should familiarise themselves with health and safety regulations, rules and practices relevant for the spaces where they work during their project (e.g. rules about late work, [lone working](#)).
- h) Students should attend occupational health check, if this is relevant for their project.
- i) Students should obtain any additional permits or licenses required for the work on their project with support from their supervisors (e.g. animal license, radioisotope user registration, access to restricted databases). Students should also consult their supervisors regarding any ethics approval for the project, if required.
- j) Students should discuss with their supervisor and other members of their supervisory team their research and training plans and enter the details of the agreed plans into their Personal Development and Learning Plan (PDLP). Any later change of the plans should be also entered into the PDLP. The initial PDLP has to be agreed no later than 3 months after the registration of the student. For details see section 3.7 on the PDLP and the electronic version (EDLP) introduced in September 2018.
- k) Students should register for and attend any training programme arranged for them, including the production, delivery and submission of any material or activity required for assessment in the context of such programmes (e.g. training modules in English, academic writing, research skills). Student should submit on time all materials required for the compulsory training modules (LSC – 40018 and LSC – 40019). Deadline extension may be granted by the PGR Director in appropriate cases if this is supported and requested by the supervisor.
- l) Students should meet their supervisor regularly. They should also meet other members of their supervisory team on a regular basis. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange the meetings with the supervisor and other members of the supervisory team. For each scheduled meeting there should be an entry in the PDLP, including a brief summary of the outcome of the meetings (note that cancelled meetings should have an entry in the PDLP).
- m) Students should attend at least 200 hours (60 hours in case of MPhil students) of transferable and domain specific skills and knowledge training in the form of lectures,

- courses, seminars, summer schools, conferences and other similar events. A record of all such event should be entered into the PDLP indicating the number of hours of attendance.
- n) Students should maintain their PDLP as a 'live document', recording all decisions, changes and other significant events related to their research project.
 - o) Students should submit their progress assessment report to the FNS PGR Administrators every 6 months.
 - p) Students should agree with their supervisor and the supervisory team about their publication plans (e.g. planned journal and conference papers) during the course of their research project and should adhere to the agreed publication schedule. This schedule may be updated by agreement between the student, supervisor and if appropriate, other members of the supervisory team. The publication schedule and any change of it should be entered into the PDLP.
 - q) Students should send any draft manuscript intended for publication to their supervisor for checking and approval. Any manuscript should be submitted for publication only after approval by the supervisor and all co-authors. Supervisors may agree a different arrangement for specific manuscripts (e.g. work in collaboration with previous supervisors).
 - r) Students must adhere strictly to the rules about academic and research misconduct (see Section 4.1 for details).
 - s) Students should discuss and agree with their supervisor about any research expenditure required to cover the costs of research equipment, equipment parts, consumables, training costs and travel, attendance and subsistence costs at research conferences and workshops that are required for the successful delivery of their research project. Discussion about such expenditures may be initiated by the student or the supervisor. If there is no agreement following the discussion the supervisor makes the final decision about the approval of any such expenditure.
 - t) Student should submit their thesis by the agreed submission deadline. Extensions may be granted following an appropriate request and only in exceptional circumstances.
 - u) Students should attend their viva and defend their thesis. Following the viva, they should address the comments by the examiners and submit or re-submit (depending on the outcome of the viva) the revised version of their thesis by the given deadline.
 - v) Students are expected to not work more than a set number of hours in addition to their research studies if they are full-time students. The set number of hours is 6 hours per week for home students who are fully funded through the University and 20 hours per week (or less, depending on the visa constraints) in the case of overseas students. Part-time students are expected to not have any additional work commitment on the days or half-days allocated for their research studies. Students are obliged to report to their supervisor any paid or voluntary work that they do in addition to their studies, including details about such work (location, employer, days and times of work, weekly duration of work, nature of work). Annex A4 outlines the policy regarding Demonstration work undertaken by PGRs.
 - w) Students should agree with their supervisor their work pattern on their research. This agreement should be respected by the student. Students have to agree any variation or change of their agreed work pattern with their supervisor.
 - x) Students are entitled to 30 working days of holiday during each year of their studies (this applies pro-rata in case of part-time students).
 - y) Overseas student who have legal obligation in the UK to regularly sign the register to indicate their attendance at the University must comply strictly with this obligation.

2.2 Supervisory Team

- a) Each postgraduate research student has a supervisory team composed of the (Lead) supervisor, the co-supervisor and possibly the advisor. The supervisor leads the supervisory team and provides the day-to-day supervision of the student. The co-supervisor normally is specialist in an area related to the student's project, but not necessarily the same area as the specialism of the supervisor. The co-supervisor provides additional advice and opinion about issues related to the research project. The advisor is an academic who is not involved directly in the research project, but follows the progress of the project and is ready to advise

- the student on any issues on which they are looking for an independent opinion (i.e. independent from the views of the supervisor and co-supervisor). The advisor role is applicable only in the case of students registered in the School of Life Sciences.
- b) The supervisor and members of the supervisory team should be familiar with relevant University regulations (C10 in particular), the Keele University [Code of Practice](#) on Postgraduate Research Degrees, the [KDA Handbook](#) and the PGR [Guidance and Forms](#) and be able to advise their student about these. The supervisory team must also consult the Research Degree Supervisor Handbook for detailed guidance on processes pertaining to supervising a PhD student (see <http://www.keele.ac.uk/research/currentpgrstudents/pgrguidanceandforms/> under 'Supervision').
 - c) The supervisor will provide an induction to the student about their personal research group to which the student belongs, their research and lab (if applicable) and the research theme(s) to which the supervisor and their personal research group belongs.
 - d) The supervisor (and co-supervisor if appropriate) will advise the student about health and safety regulations, rules and practices in their lab where the student works on the research project.
 - e) The supervisor (and co-supervisor if appropriate) will advise the student about required occupational health checks (if applicable) and any additional licenses, registrations and ethical approval required for the project of the student and about the procedure for obtaining these.
 - f) The supervisor should check that the student is provided with appropriate office and lab space (if applicable), access to IT services, access to relevant research equipment and research consumables. If these are insufficient or inappropriate the supervisor should discuss these with the Head of School and if necessary, report the case to the PGR Director.
 - g) The supervisor should advise the student about any relevant University procedures and support them in completing any relevant forms in relation with these procedures (e.g. extension request, leave of absence, change of mode of attendance).
 - h) The supervisor should provide pastoral support to the student and discuss any issues with the student that relate to or impact on the research studies of the student. The supervisor should advise the student about services provided by the University if these may be helpful for the student in addressing their problems.
 - i) The supervisor should discuss with the student and if appropriate agree on and approve any spending on research equipment, equipment parts, consumables, training and travel, attendance and subsistence costs for conferences and workshops required for the student's project.
 - j) The supervisor and co-supervisor should discuss and agree with the student the research and training plans which are entered by the students in their PDLP. Any changes of the plans should also be discussed and agreed with the student.
 - k) The supervisor should be aware of and comply with any progress and performance reporting requirements related to any sponsorship or funding received by the student.
 - l) The supervisor and if appropriate the co-supervisor and advisor (if applicable) as well should assess and provide feedback on reports produced by the student in conjunction with the compulsory training modules (LSC – 40018 and LSC – 40019). The supervisory team recommends the chair and independent assessor for the progression panel (part of the LSC – 40019) to the Postgraduate Research Lead of the Research Centre.
 - m) The supervisor should submit their interim progress assessment reports about the student and the project. If the grade that they give to the student is D or E the report should include a plan to address the problems that led to the low grade. Supervisors should make sure that they use the full range of the grades, and give the grade C for satisfactory performance (i.e. grade C should be considered a positive outcome and should be awarded for average good performance that is the equivalent of satisfactory performance). Grade D should be used if the performance is below the expected satisfactory level (i.e. below the average good performance). Grade A should be awarded only for the truly exceptional outstanding students, whose results and work are far beyond of what is normally expected from an

average good student. Supervisors should communicate clearly the meaning of the grades to their students.

- n) The supervisor should meet their student regularly. The other members of the supervisory team should also meet the student on a regular basis. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange the meetings with the supervisor and other members of the supervisory team.
- o) The supervisor and other members of the supervisory team should advise the student about training courses, modules, seminars, workshops, summer schools and other similar events that the student should attend to accumulate sufficient training in transferable and domain specific skills and knowledge.
- p) The supervisor should agree with their student the work pattern of the student for their research on their project. The supervisor may also agree a variation or change of the work pattern when this is requested by the student. The supervisor has the final say over the work pattern agreement if the views of the supervisor and student do not converge on this issue.
- q) The supervisor should check with the student whether the student works in addition to their research studies and make sure that the student adheres to the rules about additional work hours outside of their research.
- r) The supervisor and other members of the supervisory team (if appropriate) should discuss with and explain to the student the rules about academic and research misconduct (see Section 4.1 for details).
- s) The supervisor should propose replacement for himself/herself or for co-supervisor or advisor (if applicable) in case that any of these persons is expected to be no longer available to deliver their role (e.g. if they leave the University). The proposal should be made as soon as the need becomes known and should be directed towards the Postgraduate Research Lead of the Research Centre.
- t) The supervisor and other members of the supervisory team (if appropriate) should agree with the student a publication plan and revisions of this (if required).
- u) The supervisor should review any draft manuscript prepared by the student and intended for publication and provide feedback on this to the student. Any manuscript should be submitted by the student only after approval by the supervisor. The supervisor may agree a different arrangement in particular cases (e.g. work of the student with a previous supervisor).
- v) The supervisor should advise the student about the use of professional proof readers if this is required for production of publishable quality manuscripts. Keele University's guidance on [proof-reading](#) must be followed. Also refer to [Academic Misconduct Code of Practice](#).
- w) The supervisor should read and comment on chapters and sections of the thesis written by the student. Comments should be provided within 4 weeks from receipt of the text (see Annex A2 for details). The supervisor should comment and provide feedback on preliminary versions of the thesis and should approve the final version of the complete thesis.
- x) The supervisor should arrange and nominate the external and internal examiners for the thesis of the student.
- y) Following the viva, the supervisor should discuss with the student the required corrections and revisions and advise the student about how to do these by the set deadline.

2.3 Faculty Postgraduate Research (PGR) Director/Deputy Director

- a) The PGR Director oversees the postgraduate research related operations of the Faculty and coordinates the work of the Postgraduate Administrators. The PGR Director is supported by the Faculty Research Office on postgraduate matters that require dealing with finances or contracts.
- b) The PGR Director chairs the Faculty Postgraduate Committee, prepares Committee decisions and makes decisions on behalf of the Committee by Chair's action in appropriate cases.
- c) Any postgraduate student, supervisor or other member of the supervisory, or PGR Lead of a Research Centre may request a meeting with the PGR Director to discuss about problems that they experience in relation with postgraduate research projects and supervision of such projects. The PGR Director normally sees within two weeks those who request such meetings. In urgent cases the requested meeting will be arranged with appropriate urgency.

- d) The PGR Director will investigate any cases brought forward through requested meetings. Appropriate decisions will be made by the PGR Director in consultation with others (e.g. PGRLead, Associate Dean for Research, Postgraduate Administrators), or the decision will be requested from the Postgraduate Committee, or from other committees or service offices of the University. In appropriate cases the investigation of the case will be handed over to other relevant offices of the University (e.g. in case of plagiarism).

2.4 Postgraduate Research Lead of the School or Research Centre

- a) The Postgraduate Research (PGR) Lead of the School or Research Centre has oversight on all postgraduate research students affiliated with the Research Centre and/or School.
- b) The PGR Lead is expected to meet all these postgraduate research students at least twice a year either individually or as a group. Any problems and issues that are of a personal nature and relevant to a student's progress or well-being must be dealt with by an individual meeting with the student. A record of these meetings should be kept by the PGR Lead, these records may include confidential parts (e.g. in case of individual meetings).
- c) The PGR Lead should direct students experiencing problems to relevant services provided by the University and may also advise them about the use of appropriate services external to the University.
- d) The PGR Lead is available to meet students who experience any problems or seeking any kind of advice. Students should contact by email the PGR Lead and will get an appointment within 7 working days. If the PGR Lead is not available in person for a such meeting (e.g. due to annual leave) the PGR Lead will ask another senior academic from the Research Centre to see the student. A confidential record of all such meetings should be kept by the PGR Lead.
- e) If the PGR Lead receives a report from a student about any problems with their supervisor or other members of the supervisory team, the PGR Lead should consult the Head of School, Research Centre Lead (if applicable) and the PGR Director about the appropriate action. Any such reports should be investigated sensibly and if possible an early resolution solution should be achieved without major disturbance to the research project of the student and of the supervisory team. If an early resolution solution is not achievable the case should be reported to the PGR Director for further handling.
- f) If for any reason a new supervisor or other member of the supervisory team should be appointed, the PGR Lead is contacted by the PGR Director. In such case the PGR Lead consults with the student, academic colleagues who may step into the required role and the Head of School, and advises the PGR Director about the recommendation for the appointment. Annex A1 contains the details of the policy in changing a supervisor of a PhD student.
- g) The PGR Lead recommends to the PGR Director the chair and independent assessor for the progression interview of each student (part of the LSC – 40019 module), following consultation with the supervisory team.

2.5 Faculty Postgraduate Committee

- a) The Faculty Postgraduate Committee assumes all responsibilities for research degree programmes and students on behalf of the Faculty.
- b) The Committee is chaired by the PGR Director and comprises the Faculty Associate Dean for Research, PGR Leads of each Research Centre and the PGR Administrators.
- c) The Committee meets monthly during semester to oversee the progress, training, progression and other matters relating to PGR work in the Faculty. All PGR matters, from initial approval of projects, students and supervisors, through to approval of thesis titles and examiners are considered by the Postgraduate Committee.
- d) The Committee liaises with Schools and University services (Directorates) regarding procedures relating to research students.

- e) The Committee co-ordinates the appointment and allocation of supervisors, ensures that student reports and reviews are completed in a timely fashion, monitors student progress, and takes action where progress is deemed unsatisfactory (including the setting of required work, and the issue of formal warnings and liaises with supervisors and students regarding research training and ensuring that students receive adequate and appropriate training.
- f) The Committee manages the budget for research training through the Researcher Development and Skills Training fund.
- g) The Committee reports to the Faculty Research Committee and makes recommendations to University Research Degrees Committee (RDC) for formal consideration of those matters which fall within its remit, including the appointment of examiners (for theses and oral examinations).
- h) The Committee contributes to strategic aspects of research in the Faculty, through representing the postgraduate research perspective to the Faculty Research Committee.
- i) Decisions of the Committee may be made by Chair's action by the PGR Director in appropriate cases.

2.6 Faculty Postgraduate Student Voice Committee

- a) Postgraduate research students belonging to each Research Centre nominate a PGR Student Representative who becomes a member of the Faculty Postgraduate (PGR) Student Voice Committee. If no representative is available for a Research Centre, the PGR Director asks the PGR Administrators and the PGR Leads of the Centre to discuss with the students and ask them to nominate a representative.
- b) The PGR Student Voice Committee meets at least two times a year and discusses any issues related to postgraduate research students that are brought to it by any member. The meetings of the Committee are chaired by the PGR Director, who may also bring discussion issues to the meeting.
- c) The outcome of the PGR Student Voice Committee discussions is presented by the PGR Director to the Faculty Postgraduate Committee.
- d) The PGR Committee is in charge of organising the annual Faculty PGR Symposium with support from the PGR Student Voice Committee.

2.7 University Committees and Directorates

The Keele Doctoral Academy provides an overarching support system for all matters relating to postgraduate research students. This includes academic governance, rules and regulations, and co-ordination of the various support systems that can help. The KDA advocates on behalf of postgraduate students across the University and externally, and to support and promote the work of our PGR community through research training and research events. The University Administrative Directorates are the primary administrative departments which support postgraduate research students and programmes, and the processes and procedures regulating them. University rules and regulations relating to research degrees, including the Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Degrees, Doctoral progression and the final examination process are administered on behalf of Senate by the University Administrative Directorates through the Research Degrees Committee (RDC). Many of the decisions taken by RDC constitute formal approval of recommendations from the Faculty Postgraduate committees.

2.8 Keele Postgraduate Association (KPA)

The Keele Postgraduate Association (KPA) is the association of postgraduate research students at Keele. All postgraduate research students automatically become a member of the KPA when they

join the University and are entitled to use KPA facilities. The KPA is a postgraduate run organisation with elected officers including President, Secretary and Treasurer. They represent postgraduate research students and help with any academic or welfare problems that students may encounter while at Keele. The KPA manages the KPA Pub that operates a bar and offers hot and cold food, lounge and TV, pool table, meeting room and computer resource area. The KPA organises special events and runs a competitive bursary scheme which, for example, can provide funds to help with attendance at a conference. The KPA offices can be found at Keele Hall (top floor). The KPA office phone number is 34228.

3. The Postgraduate Research Experience

3.1 Induction

Induction for postgraduate research students is organised at the University level at the beginning of the academic year at the end of September. Around the same time the Faculty also organises an induction for students based in the Faculty. Documents (e.g. video, slides) about the induction events are made available to all students, so those who could not attend the events can access the material presented at these events.

The induction generally covers briefly all aspects of life as a postgraduate research student. This includes an introduction to the University and the research environment, information about assessment and progression procedures, information about available resources and training opportunities, the KPA and other matters.

3.2 Resources

Students are normally provided shared office and lab space where they can carry out their research project. In the case of projects that involve fieldwork appropriate access to fieldwork environment will be provided. Access to a networked computer, printers and to all relevant software systems, tools, and environments supported by the University will be provided to all students in their allocated office space. Office space for PhD students is generally limited. Students going into their continuation (fourth year) may be requested to hot desk and possibly relocate offices to allow incoming students a desk space. If this is the case, then the students concerned would be given at least 4 weeks' notice of this.

The students are provided access to research equipment and consumables required for their research. In appropriate cases these may also include data, cells, tissues, material samples, animals and other experimental materials required for the project. All such provisions should be adequate for the delivery of the planned research. The research expense funding arrangements for the project should be set up from the beginning such that they allow normal execution and progress of the project free of unreasonable financial constraints.

Students have access to all library resources, including access to electronic journals and books, publication databases, and printed books and journal issues (including borrowing services from other libraries) that are available through the University Library.

The University provides a range of support services that are available to postgraduate research students. These include training services for English language, academic writing, statistics and other general research-related topics, counselling service, hardship fund, and so on. Normally the supervisor, other members of the supervisory team or Postgraduate Administrators advise students about the availability and details of these services.

3.3 Training

The Faculty is committed to providing continuous and extensive training of postgraduate researchers, in both scientific research methods and transferable skills, over and above the University requirements. Your training requirements will be agreed with your supervisor and entered in your PDLP. The skills set that students are expected to develop during their research training are given in the [Vitae](#) Researcher Development Framework and the Research Councils UK (RCUK)

joint statement on training requirements. These skills may be present on commencement, explicitly taught, or developed during the course of the research. The analysis of learning needs and skills development objectives should be set against the national benchmark of the *Vitae Researcher Development Framework*, emphasising not only research skills but also personal development and employability. The website www.vitae.ac.uk contains useful information on identifying training needs. The website of the [Academic Development Centre](http://www.academicdevelopmentcentre.ac.uk) also contains useful information in this respect (*What do I need to learn to carry out my research? What do I want to be able to do or do better? What skills do I want to develop? How will I achieve these goals?*).

3.3.1 Formal subject-specific training

Formal training (e.g. attendance of lectures) may be organised for the student if the supervisor considers this necessary for the successful delivery of the research project. Normally this is arranged by the supervisor and the student is expected to attend such training. Formal assessment may be part of such training but this is not necessarily required – the supervisor may arrange this for the student. Any such training needs and plans and also the execution of such plans must be documented in the PDLP.

3.3.2 Research training

General research training is provided through the compulsory and optional research training modules. In the FNS the compulsory modules are the LSC – 40018 Literature review (10 credits) and the LSC – 40019 Context, Strategy and Methodology (Progression Report) (15 credits). Both modules are delivered through the supervisor of the student and require the submission of report. Both modules have to be completed within the first year of study. Normally the LSC – 40018 must be completed within the first 6 months of the first year and the LSC – 40019 must be completed following the completion of the LSC – 40018 and within 9 months after the start of the research degree studies. Further details about these modules are provided in the relevant module handbooks. Further research training modules are provided by the University; these include LSC – 40017 Introduction to Scientific Research; LSC – 40020 Biostatistics and a new PG Certificate in Research Techniques.

If necessary, deadline extensions for submission of reports for the compulsory modules may be requested by the PGR student with the support of the supervisor. The deadline extension requests should be submitted to the Postgraduate Administrator.

All FNS PGR students must contact the Postgraduate Administrator to ensure that they are registered for the research training modules. The Student Records Office will register students for LSC-40018 and LSC-40019 modules and the relevant Administrator will register students for the remaining modules. The Postgraduate Administrator will record the result of the assessment as appropriate.

In exceptional circumstances it is possible to obtain partial exemption from the compulsory research training modules, if the student has already done relevant research training and can provide evidence of assessment and successful completion. The exemption request should be addressed to the Director of Postgraduate Research and should be submitted by the student to the Postgraduate Administrator. The request should be supported by the supervisor.

Information is also available on

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/natsci/research/informationforcurrentresearchstudents/>

3.3.3 Non subject-specific and transferable skills

All PhD students must do around 200 hours or equivalent of non-domain-specific and transferable skills training during the duration of their studies. In the case of MPhil students, the requirement is around 60 hours of non-subject-specific training during the duration of the studies.

Non-domain-specific training may cover presentation skills, engagement in seminars, workshops and conferences (e.g. giving a talk, presenting a poster, attending a seminar), general experimental skills, networking, scientific writing, communication skills, and other professional development activities. If the student is unclear whether a certain activity qualifies or not as such training they should consult their supervisor.

3.3.4 Research seminars

All research students are expected to attend research seminars organised in the Research Centre and School where they belong. These seminars may be organised at theme, centre or school level. Active participation of the students in these seminars is encouraged.

There will also be research seminars where PGR students can present their work (e.g. annual PGR symposia at centre, school, faculty or university level). All PGR students are expected to attend and to present their research at these events.

3.3.5 Conferences, workshops, training courses

In general, it is expected that PGR students attend conferences, symposia and workshops relevant for their subject and also present their work as talks or posters at these events. The supervisors, research centres and schools will provide support both in financial and administrative terms to PGR students to organise their attendance at conferences, symposia and workshops. Each student should discuss and agree with their supervisor their plans in this respect.

Students should also attend training courses (e.g. summer schools) that are relevant for their research project. Attendance at training courses should be discussed and agreed with the supervisor. The supervisor has to make sure that any agreed plans for conferences, symposia, workshops and training courses are realistic and supported administratively and financially (i.e. that they are within the budget that is allocated directly or indirectly to the research project of the student).

3.3.6 Teaching training opportunities

All PGR students are encouraged to contribute to teaching as Demonstrators. All schools are expected to provide such opportunities to all PGR students (e.g. demonstration for introductory level modules). The [Academic Development Centre](#) runs the training course for Demonstrators. Successful completion of this course is required in order to act as Demonstrators in undergraduate laboratories. Students should register for this module in late September / early October if they have not done yet Demonstrator training.

PhD students may also register for the Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Programme run by the [Academic Development Centre](#). Registration for this should be done only after prior discussion and approval by the supervisor.

3.3.7 Opportunities for engagement with industry

FNS supports the engagement of PGR students with companies and other external organisations. This engagement may take the form of joint mini-projects, consulting, or informal collaboration and communication. The Faculty aims to organise events where PGR students can network with industry representatives and may start the building of roots of engagement with industrial partners.

Any industry collaboration that involves paid work or generation of intellectual property (e.g. innovations that can be patented or copyrighted) should be approved in advance by the University (normally by the Department of Engagement and Partnerships or the Faculty Research Office – depending on the scale of the collaboration). Such collaborations must adhere to all relevant laws, regulations, contracts and rules.

3.3.8 Researcher Development and Transferable Skills Training Fund

Any postgraduate research student in the Faculty of Natural Sciences may apply for support from the Researcher Development and Transferable Skills Training Fund to cover the costs of relevant training events. These training events should be focused on training and DO NOT include participation at scientific conferences. However, workshops co-located with conferences that provide a training opportunity will be considered. In general, it is expected that the supervisor of the student or the School of the student will contribute around 20% of the required funds. In exceptional cases a lower contribution may also be considered. In general, the amount of applied funds should be not more than £500 per year per individual postgraduate research student. In exceptional cases a larger amount may also be considered. In general, it is preferred if more than one student participates and benefits from the training event. Guidelines and a form are provided in Annex A5.

3.4 Working hours

Postgraduate research students are normally expected to work during normal office hours (9 am - 5 pm) and to be available for meetings with their supervisor during normal office hours. Variation from this work pattern is allowed following prior approval by the supervisor. Work during outside of normal office hours is allowed, however relevant health and safety considerations and constraints must be observed (e.g. working alone after normal office hours may not be permitted in certain circumstances).

3.5 Leave

Students are entitled to have a leave of maximum 30 working days in total during a full academic year. Students should let their supervisor know about the dates when they wish to be on leave at least 4 weeks in advance, unless there are special circumstances that warrant urgency. Students may take their planned leave following the approval by the supervisor. In the case of overseas students any leave must be in compliance with the relevant immigration & visa legislation and regulations and this should be checked in advance with the Faculty and if necessary with the Immigration & Visa Compliance office of the University.

3.6 Work commitments

Students are allowed to work outside of their research training programme, however time commitment limits apply to such work. The rules about work commitments are stated in the subsection about roles, duties and expectations in relation with postgraduate research students. In the case of overseas students any paid or voluntary work must be in compliance with the relevant immigration & visa legislation and regulations.

3.7 Personal Development and Learning Plan

All students are required to develop and maintain a Personal Development and Learning Plan (PLDP). The PLDP should be discussed with the supervisory team and submitted to PGR Committee within 3 months of registration. The PLDP sets out an agreement between the student, the Lead Supervisor and the Director of Postgraduate Research about the learning needs of the student and how these are to be met. As such the PLDP is a central log of an individual student's targets and objectives, learning and skills development, research training completed and a record of supervisory meetings which in combination will help the student to be successful on their postgraduate research course. Students are required to keep an accurate record of activities undertaken in relation to their research degree programme, updated on a regular basis, and submitted when appropriate as part of the Progress Review. The PLDP is therefore considered a 'living document' which must be kept up to date by the student at least once a month and reviewed by the Supervisory Team at least every 6 weeks.

For all Postgraduate Research Students, starting their course from September 2018 onwards the PLDP, will be available online accessible through the eVision. To access the electronic PLDP (EPDLP), you will need to log into your eVision account.

The PGR Director, the Lead of Research Training and the student's Supervisor can advise a student about their individual Personal Development Learning Plan. Any research needs identified and training programmes to be undertaken will then be agreed and arranged by the Supervisor and Student. This should be logged in the Learning Plan. Students can apply for funds to help cover the costs of these requirements. The information contained within the PLDP can be shared with your Supervisor, Postgraduate Director of Research, Research Institute administrative staff and University Central Services, as appropriate.

Further details and a handbook for using the EPDLP can be found at <https://www.keele.ac.uk/students/academiclife/currentpgrstudents/postgraduateresearchtraining/>

3.8 Annual and Interim Progress Review

There are two regular progress review processes which PGR students must undergo: Annual Progress Reviews for Years 1, 2 and 3 and Interim Progress Reviews. These formal progress reviews are an essential mechanism for maximizing the likelihood of the student completing the programme within their registration period, and ensuring that the student receives appropriate support to make improvements in cases where progress is unsatisfactory.

Full details of the review guidelines and procedures are given in the handbook on Annual and Interim Progress Review which can be downloaded from the website <http://www.keele.ac.uk/research/currentpgrstudents/pgrguidanceandforms/> under 'Annual and Interim Progress Review'.

NOTE: MPhil students and their supervisory teams do not need to complete any of the Annual Progress Review stages as part of the requirements of their degree but need to complete the 6-monthly Interim Progress Reviews.

3.8.1 Annual Progress Review 1 (formerly Doctoral Progression)

Annual Progress Review 1 is the progression from the first year of a PhD to the second year (second to third for PT). It involves a comprehensive system of assessment and detailed scrutiny of academic performance and promise as detailed below to be completed approximately within 10 months of initial registration (20 months for part-time). In the case of transfer from MPhil to a PhD other criteria also apply (see below). FNS has well-developed procedures for the consideration of this progression, supported by assessment forms and feedback provided by supervisors, which meet the requirements of the University COP for Postgraduate Research.

The decision is made by the FNS Postgraduate Committee following the assessment of the student and recommendation by the progression panel. This decision is based on a variety of written evidence and on an interview with a Progression Panel. The documentation includes any Progress report forms, reports associated with any FNS compulsory training modules (the Literature Review – LSC 40018 and Progression Report – LSC 40019 for all students), and written assessments by the Lead supervisor of the suitability for doctoral study. Full details of the assessment process for the purpose of progression can be downloaded from the website <http://www.keele.ac.uk/research/currentpgrstudents/pgrguidanceandforms/> under Section 3.2 'Annual Progress Review 1'. The criteria for progression may be summarised as: academic progress and promise, demonstration of the intellectual and cognitive skills necessary to complete the PhD research, demonstration of an ability to set and keep deadlines, keeping the PDLP records up-to-date, sufficient research specific and generalist non-specific training, submission of satisfactory reports for compulsory modules.

Possible recommendations made by Postgraduate Committee about the student to the RDC are:

1. The student is suitable for doctoral progression and may progress
2. Additional work is required, and Progression should be reconsidered in 2 months following completion of this work (Progression deferred)
3. The student is not suitable for doctoral study, but is suitable for masters level study and should now be required to prepare a thesis for submission for a master's degree

The PGR Committee makes the final decision about the progression of PGR students which is then reported to the University RDC.

Students registered for an MPhil may be recommended for transfer to a PhD if the progression criteria have been met, if exceptional progress has been made, if the research conducted clearly forms part of a more extended study, and if funding is available. Any transfer from MPhil to PhD should follow the APR1 process outlined above. Discussions about transfers from MPhil to PhD between student and supervisory team should be done sufficiently early so that APR 1 is completed within 10 months of initial MPhil registration.

Due to visa regulations special additional requirements apply for International students wishing to transfer from MPhil to PhD. The Director of Postgraduate Research should be contacted early so that if transfer is approved the arrangements for replacement of the MPhil Tier 4 visa by a new Tier 4 visa for PhD studies are well advanced.

3.8.2 Annual Progress Review 2

Annual Progress Review 2 is the second formal annual progress review of a PGR student. It must take place approximately 10 months into a full-time PGR student's second year of doctoral study (or 4th year of part-time study). This review takes the form of a student's interview with their supervisory team. The interview covers the student's general progress and standard of work, progress with research training and personal development, and any other issues which the student and/or supervisory team wish to discuss. Details of the guidelines and procedure can be found from the website <http://www.keele.ac.uk/research/currentpgrstudents/pgrguidanceandforms/> under Section 3.3 'Annual Progress Review 2'.

3.8.3 Annual Progress Review 3 (formerly 30-months Pre-submission Review)

Annual Progress Review 3 is a PGR student's third and final formal annual progress review. It takes place approximately 10 months into a full-time PGR student's third year of doctoral study (or 6th year of part-time study). This progress review also takes the form of an interview between a student and their supervisory team. The interview assesses the readiness of the student to submit their thesis and determines the student's general progress and standard of work in advance of the anticipated submission date, completion of all research training and personal development requirements, and any other issues which the student and/or supervisory team wish to discuss as part of agreeing a plan to completion. Details of the guidelines and procedure can be found from the website <http://www.keele.ac.uk/research/currentpgrstudents/pgrguidanceandforms/> under Section 3.4 'Annual Progress Review 3'.

3.8.4 Interim Progress Review (formerly 6-monthly Progress Report)

The University operates a system of Interim Progress Reports at 6-monthly intervals, administered by the FNS Postgraduate Research Committee, which monitors PGR progress and training. This six monthly progress report is applicable to all PG Research students with reports due in Autumn and Spring every year.

The progress report is divided into two separate and independent reports, one for the student and one for the supervisor. The progress report forms are distributed at the appropriate time by the FNS Postgraduate Administrator. The filled-in forms are submitted separately to the Postgraduate Committee and also to the supervisor and the student, respectively. Both the supervisor and the student comment on progress and the supervisor will recommend a Grade (A-E). The supervisor may take this opportunity to review together with the student the research targets and objectives, and the target dates, in the PDLP. The supervisor may also include a recommendation for a set of actions. Recommending such actions is compulsory if the grade awarded to the student is D or E. The recommended actions are reviewed, possibly modified, and approved by the Postgraduate Committee. The actions may involve the supervisor, the student, the PGR Director, or other senior academics or higher University committees.

The student grades range from A-E. A means outstanding, B means very good, C is generally satisfactory and good, D is borderline satisfactory, finally, E is unsatisfactory. The grades may be revised by the FNS Postgraduate Committee on the basis of the report and possibly additional information requested from the supervisor or the student. If the student's progress is borderline satisfactory the supervisor must explore the difficulties and recommend corrective actions. If the progress is not satisfactory, the supervisor will explore the difficulties in conjunction with the FNS Postgraduate Committee to decide on appropriate action(s). Reports graded D or E will be discussed by the FNS Postgraduate Committee to assess the actions that should be taken.

Details of the guidelines and procedure can be found from the website <http://www.keele.ac.uk/research/currentpgrstudents/pgrguidanceandforms/> under Section 4 'Interim Progress Review'.

The Director of Postgraduate Research may authorise the recording of incomplete Progress Report forms, irrespective of whether it is the supervisor or the student who has not completed their report, if completion is not achieved within a reasonable period following reminders from the FNS Postgraduate Administrator.

3.9 Dealing with Unsatisfactory Performance

If a PGR student gets the E grade in an Interim progress review report this will result in a formal warning letter issued by the PGR Director to the student.

In general, any problems or difficulties with the training or progress of PGR students are discussed by the FNS PG Research Committee. The Committee is empowered to issue formal warnings for unsatisfactory progress at any stage of the research programme. The Director of Postgraduate Research may issue a formal warning under the terms of [University Regulation C10](#) (Section 7) according to the criteria and process detailed in the [Code of Practice](#), specifying the work or actions that must be undertaken during the following 4 weeks. Repeated failure to comply with the required work or actions may result in the University requiring a student to withdraw.

The PGR Committee can issue three consecutive academic warnings to a student, in total. If a student fails to comply with terms of the third warning, the PGR Committee will recommend to the University that the student be withdrawn. Once a student has satisfied the terms of an academic warning, they will return to being in good academic standing. Students can expect any further problems to be subject to another first-stage warning. The student may appeal following the procedures and University regulations set out about appeals.

Details of the guidelines and procedure can be found from the website <http://www.keele.ac.uk/research/currentpgrstudents/pgrguidanceandforms/> under Section 2 'General Progress Monitoring: Academic Standing and Academic Warnings'.

3.10 Continuation and Change of Mode of Attendance

Change to Continuation status may be requested when the PGR student has finished the research work that requires experiments and close and regular supervision by the supervisor; and the student needs only minimal supervision except with regard to preparation of the thesis. Both the student and the supervisor need to confirm to PGR Committee that this status reflects the level of resources required to complete the PhD and that submission will be achieved in a maximum of twelve months. This change of status results in a significant reduction in fees payable to the University. The PG Committee may recommend the change of status to the RDC, which makes the final decision about such changes.

The mode of attendance may also be changed from full-time (FT) to part-time (PT) or from part-time (PT) to full-time (FT). Any request for such change should be discussed in advance with the supervisor and should be supported by appropriate reasons (e.g. medical reasons, change in family circumstances). Such changes have considerable implication on available time for research, funding arrangements, fees and visa compliance (for overseas students). All these have to be considered before the request for the change is submitted and should be made sure that the implications of the change are compatible with any relevant constraints that may exist in these respects (e.g. funding contracts). The request for change of mode of attendance should be submitted to the PG Committee using appropriate forms set out in the COP for Postgraduate Research. Change of mode of attendance request from FT to PT will not be considered if the student has less than 6 months left for FT study. Such changes will also not be considered once a student changed to Continuation status.

3.11 Time Limits, Extensions and Leave of Absence

The maximum time allowed by the University for a FT PhD is 4 years and FT MPhil is 2 years. Part-time degrees are pro rata.

Requests for extension may be submitted by PGR students who expect that they cannot submit their thesis by the end of the 4th year of their study (FT – pro-rata extended in the case of PT students). The request should be discussed with the supervisor – for appropriate forms see the Code of Practice. Any extension beyond the four-year limit (FT PhD) requires approval by both FNS Postgraduate Committee and the University Research Degrees Committee (RDC). Cases for extension will be based on exceptional circumstances such as personal problems or unforeseen events influencing your productivity. If an extension beyond the maximum period is granted, it is never more than 12 months, and RDC normally stipulate that there will be no further extension.

Students may apply for leave of absence using appropriate forms (see Code of Practice). The leave of absence can be a minimum period of 1 month and maximum 12 months. Acceptable reasons for leave of absence include medical reasons, bereavement, personal financial hardship and other similar reasons. The application for leave of absence should be supported by appropriate documentary evidence (e.g. letters from doctors, bank statements). The application for leave of absence should be discussed first with the supervisor and the application should be submitted to the PGR Committee. During the period of leave of absence, the student is expected to not be present at the University, no supervision will be provided, and no fees are payable by the student or on behalf of the student. In the case of sponsored students, the leave of absence must not conflict with the constraints imposed by the sponsor and if necessary (due to the sponsorship contract) the student must obtain the approval of the sponsor prior to applying for the leave of absence. International students must consult first the Visa and Immigration Compliance office of the University before applying for a leave of absence and should follow the advice that they receive. Any agreed periods of leave of absence will automatically extend the student's maximum period for submission by an equivalent period.

3.12 Preparation and Submission of the Thesis

For details on requirements for masters and doctoral degrees see the University's Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research.

The postgraduate research work culminates in the writing, submission and the examination of the thesis. It is strongly advisable to write as the PhD research goes along. Students find the prospect of writing a complete PhD thesis from scratch after three years extremely daunting. It becomes very difficult indeed after leaving Keele and after starting a new job. Supervisor should be given drafts thesis chapters in time so that they can give useful feedback (normally within 4 weeks following the receipt of the draft chapter). It is unlikely to produce finished products of individual chapters straight away.

The University's Regulations stipulate that the final Ph.D. thesis must:

- contain work the majority of which has been done subsequent to the registration for the Ph.D. degree;
- not exceed 100,000 words;
- form a contribution to the knowledge of the subject and afford evidence of originality, shown either by the discovery of new facts and/or by the exercise of independent critical power;
- be the candidate's own account of the research.

Work that has been published during the time of the PhD research in form of journal or conference papers may be included into the PhD thesis following appropriate editing (e.g. to avoid self-plagiarism via duplication of material). The publication source(s) must be cited properly and your supervisor(s) should be aware of this. It is advised that you have a statement at the beginning of the chapter stating that the text follows closely from your cited publication.

Regulations for the MPhil stipulate that:

- the candidate must demonstrate competence in independent work or experimentation, of understanding of the appropriate techniques, and of competence in making critical use of published work and source materials
- the thesis shall not exceed 60,000 words
- the thesis shall normally consist of a critical review of the field of research together with some new results.

Before submitting the thesis, the title should be submitted to the Faculty Postgraduate Research Committee for approval using the appropriate form. For full-time PhD students this is normally done 3 months before thesis submission, after consultation with the supervisor. When the thesis is submitted the wording on the title page must be identical to that approved by the Faculty Postgraduate Research Committee. Capital letters may only be used for proper nouns and where specific scientific terms require capitalisation.

Once the title is agreed, the University seeks to appoint the internal and external examiner(s) required and an independent Chair, who is responsible for the *conduct* of the viva and the timely submission of all reports. The PhD and MPhil theses are always examined by viva voce examination. There are usually two examiners, an external examiner and an internal examiner, both of whom must be satisfied that the work contained in the thesis is worthy of the award of a Ph.D. The external examiner is often a professor or person holding a PhD who has experience of examining and postgraduate research supervision. The internal examiner - who is not the candidate's supervisor - also normally holds a PhD and has experience of examining and postgraduate research supervision. In some cases, (e.g. where it is not possible to appoint an internal examiner) there will be two external examiners – both examiners must be external if the student is or has been employed (full-time or part-time) by the University (this does not apply to PhD students who work occasionally as demonstrators). The external examiner is normally proposed by the supervisor in conjunction with the candidate. The names of the internal and external examiners have to be submitted to the FNS Postgraduate Committee 3 months before the thesis is due to be submitted. The proposed examiners are assessed and recommended for approval by the FNS Postgraduate. The final approval decision about the examiners is made by the RDC. This must be borne in mind by students who have hard deadlines to meet (e.g. because the time allowed is nearly up, or expiry of visa etc.).

The detailed rules about the structure and content of the thesis are set in the Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research. The maximum length for Master's is 60,000 words. The maximum length for PhDs is 100,000 words. It is anticipated that most theses will fall well short of these limits.

The thesis must be word-processed on A4 sized paper. The text should be double-spaced, preferably with a line-space between paragraphs.

The first page of the thesis must carry the following information:

- Title of thesis
- Author's name
- Degree for which the thesis is submitted
- Year

Each thesis should start with an abstract (of not more than 300 words). There should then be a contents page. The thesis should include Part 1 of the declaration of authenticity and acknowledgements (full guidance is given in the Code of Practice). In many theses it is usual to start - and end - each chapter with a summary of the main points. The final chapter often summarises the whole thesis and points to future relevant work. The references - not a bibliography - come after the final chapter. The thesis usually concludes with a set of appendices which contain material that is too detailed for the main body of the thesis.

The two-part declaration form about the authenticity (see Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research) must be completed before submission of the thesis.

.From 2019, instead of submitting paper copies of their thesis and accompanying forms for examination, PGR students will now submit these documents in electronic format only.

The decision about submission of the thesis is made by the student. It is recommended to consult about the timing and contents of this with the supervisor; however, the ultimate decision is made by the student even if the supervisor disagrees with this (either or both in terms of content and time of submission).

3.13 The Viva and Completion

PhD and MPhil theses are examined by viva voce examination. In this examination you must 'defend' your thesis. It is not easy to give guidance to students on how to prepare for the viva because every thesis differs. Similarly, examiners differ on what they choose to discuss. Some like to take a chapter by chapter (or even page by page) approach, and work through the thesis. Others like to concentrate on one chapter or one general issue and probe the candidate's knowledge and understanding about it. Others may have about three or four issues that they wish to discuss with the candidate.

PGR students need to bring a copy of their thesis to the examination, and they should not expect to be told by the examiners or chair of the outcome of the examination.

PGR students should have enough confidence in what you have done to stand your ground against any question asked by the examiners. The questions during the viva may cover any aspect of the work presented in the thesis. It is advisable to read the thesis all the way through a few days before the viva. Common questions at the viva include:

- How did you become interested in the topic?
- What do you think your thesis has achieved?
- What do you think are the major strengths/weaknesses of your thesis?
- What are you planning to do next (in terms of the research)?

The appointed examiners conduct the oral examination which is chaired by an independent, experienced member of staff. The independent Chair does not contribute to the examination process itself, but is present throughout the viva to ensure that proper and fair procedures are followed and that all reports are submitted in a timely manner.

The examiners write independent and confidential reports which they submit to the Research Degrees Committee before the viva. In the case of PhD examinations, the examiners are asked to bear in mind the following questions when writing their reports:

- Does the thesis give satisfactory evidence of experience of methods of research such as can be normally gained by a student in three years work following graduation?
- Has the greater portion of the work been done subsequent to the registration of the candidate for the PhD degree?
- How much of the work, if any, has been done in collaboration?
- Is the thesis a contribution to knowledge in the subject matter, and does it afford evidence of originality, shown either by the discovery of new facts or by the exercise of independent critical power (or both)?
- Is the literary presentation satisfactory and if not already published in an approved form, is the thesis - or parts of it - suitable for publication either as submitted or in amended form?

In the case of MPhil examinations, the examiners are asked to bear in mind the following questions when writing their reports:

- Does the thesis give satisfactory evidence of experience of methods of research,

such as can normally be gained by a student in one year's work following graduation?

- Is there evidence of the candidate's competence in independent work or experimentation, of understanding of the appropriate techniques and of competence in making critical use of published work and source materials?
- Does the candidate write clearly and well?
- Is there a satisfactory discussion of the purpose of the investigation, its significance and of any relevant previous work?
- Is the thesis presented in a satisfactory form, with the necessary diagrams, references, etc.?

After the viva examination the examiners agree a joint report and submit this report to RDC. The examiners may make one of the following recommendations:

1 The student be awarded the degree for which he or she has made a submission.

2 The student be awarded the degree for which he or she has made a submission once minor corrections have been made to the thesis to the satisfaction of the examiner(s) named. (a time limit of up to six months is usually set for the corrections to be made)

3 [Only for original submissions, not for re-submissions.] - Although the required standard for the award for which the student has submitted has not been met, the submission is of sufficient merit to justify the student being permitted to re-present the thesis and to submit to a further oral examination (if required) within one year from the date of the decision at the relevant meeting of Research Degrees Committee.

4 [Only for doctoral candidates, not for master's candidates.] - The student should be approved for a Masters level award, not a Doctoral level award.

5 [Only for original submissions by doctoral candidates, not for re-submissions, nor for master's candidates.] - The required standard for a doctoral level award has not been met, and the submission is of insufficient merit to justify the award of a doctoral degree. However, the student should be permitted to re-present the thesis for the award of a master's degree, and to submit to a further oral examination, within one year from the date of the decision at the relevant meeting of the Research Degrees Committee.

6 The student should not be awarded any degree, nor be permitted to represent the thesis, nor submit to any further examination (fail).

7 The examiners are unable to come to a joint recommendation and an additional examiner or examiners should be appointed whose decision shall resolve the matter.

Both the separate and the joint reports are submitted to the Research Degrees Committee, which decides the final outcome. Copies of all reports are given to the examined PGR student. The reports will include the list of changes and corrections required by the examiners for the final version of the thesis.

If revisions are required, the PGR student has to submit the revised version of the thesis by the specified deadline for the revisions. The revised thesis will be sent to the examiners (often only to the internal examiner) who check the changes that were made and make their final recommendation to the Research Degrees Committee.

In the case when re-submission of the thesis is required by the examiners the joint report will specify the amount of time that is available for the PGR student to make the required changes for the re-submission. The re-submission may require doing more experiments, re-analysis of the data, major re-organisation of chapters and any other major change of the thesis. Following the implementation of the required changes and additions the PGR student re-submits the thesis and usually a second viva examination follows.

Following the final recommendation to the RDC, the final decision is recommended to the Senate of the University. The degree is awarded by the Senate's decision.

A final copy of the thesis, incorporating any corrections, additions and changes in response to examiner comments and requests, have to be made and bound professionally and according to University regulations (see Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research). The final bound copy, along with an electronic copy, must be submitted to the University Library before the degree can be conferred. It is customary to provide a copy of the final version to the supervisor as well.

By the conferring of the title (PhD or MPhil depending on the programme of the PGR student) the student completes their research degree studies. Following completion of studies, the former PGR student may use the scientific title awarded to them by the University.

4. Handling Problems and Exceptional Cases

4.1 Academic Misconduct

Guidance on the avoidance of plagiarism and academic dishonesty can be found in the Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research in accordance with [Regulation D4: Student Academic Misconduct](#) and the University's [Student Academic Misconduct Code of Practice](#).

In general, any form of academic misconduct should be avoided in all contexts, including drafts of papers intended for publication, published papers, data and data representations (e.g. images) used for draft and published papers, internal or informally published research reports, and so on.

In the case that a supervisor or a PGR student suspects that there is a case of academic misconduct this should be reported to the Research Centre PGR Lead as soon as sufficient evidence can be provided to support the claim. The Research Centre PGR Lead should contact the Academic Conduct Officer of the School and jointly assess the case. The case should be reported formally to the Postgraduate Research Director, who may take further action following the recommendation of the Academic Conduct Officer and Research Centre PGR Lead, which should be included in the report. The follow-on action may be:

- the issue of a warning to the person(s) involved in the academic misconduct
- establishing a Faculty level misconduct panel chaired by the Postgraduate Research Director or the Dean of Research and involving members from another Faculty and the Academic Misconduct office of the University
- reporting the case to the Academic Misconduct office of the University and requesting the establishment of a University level misconduct panel the further investigate the case.

The Faculty level misconduct panel may instruct the Postgraduate Research Director to issue a warning to the person(s) involved or to report the case to the Academic Misconduct office, as described above.

4.2 Reporting Concerns with PGR Experience (Student and Supervisor)

The student and/or their supervisor may develop concerns about the student's PGR experience. This may be due to problems with their research environment and/or facilities within their School or Faculty or personal difficulties with fellow PGR students and/or other academic staff in the School or Faculty or difficulties that the student and supervisor have experienced with the supervisory relationship. The student and supervisor are able to raise concerns about this and propose a solution. The PGR Director will investigate into the concern and determine an outcome of this investigation. Relevant forms can be obtained from <http://www.keele.ac.uk/research/currentpgrstudents/pgrguidanceandforms/> under 'Reporting Concerns with PGR Experience (Student and Supervisor)'

4.3 Complaints

There may be external or personal factors which are affecting the research work of PGR students. If a PGR student experiences any difficulty with any aspect of their work in the Faculty, or any personal problems that may affect their work, they may complain informally or formally about these. The student may also approach the KPA or a university support agency such as the Independent Advice Unit for independent advice about how to deal with the problem that they experience.

The complaints procedures in general are set out in the Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research and in relevant regulations of the University.

The complaints procedure consists of an informal stage and a formal stage. A formal complaint regarding supervision will not be entertained unless the informal procedures have been exhausted first. The student may, at any time, seek the assistance of the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Research and Enterprise in dealing with their problem or in presenting a case.

At the informal stage the student should make known to the supervisor their grounds for dissatisfaction. If the grounds for dissatisfaction persist, the student should make the problem known to the Research Centre PGR Lead and following that to the Postgraduate Research Director or (if the supervisor is also the Postgraduate Director) the Associate Dean for Research. The Postgraduate Research Director or the Associate Dean for Research will investigate the nature of the complaint and attempt to resolve it to the satisfaction of the student. If the problem persists, the complaint should be addressed to the local Early Resolution Officer (<http://www.keele.ac.uk/paa/studentappealscomplaintsandconduct/studentcomplaints/>) for investigation.

A student who, having gone through the informal procedures, remains dissatisfied with the adequacy of supervision may make a formal written complaint following the procedures set out in University [Regulation 26](#), stating clearly the grounds of the complaint. The senior officer appointed to deal with complaints is the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education and Student Experience.

4.4 Appeals

Appeal procedures are set out in the Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research and Regulation C10.

PGR students may appeal against decisions that are made about them. Such decisions include grades awarded to them in progress reports, the progression decision, decisions related to academic misconduct cases, decisions about formal complaints that they submitted, the outcome of their viva examination, decisions involving warnings, decisions about the recommendation of termination of their studies and the effective termination of their studies by University decision, and any other decisions made by the University and its bodies that affect the student.

The students may ask for independent advice in relation with appeals from the KPA or a university support agency such as the Independent Advice Unit or ASK in the Student Union.

4.5 Change of Supervisors

If a student is not happy with the progress of their work or supervision, they are encouraged to make immediate representation to the Research Centre PGR Lead or the Postgraduate Research Director of the Faculty. It is important that the student takes early action, so that an unsatisfactory situation is not allowed to continue for too long. If a student feels that they are not establishing an effective working relationship with their supervisor, they should address the issue by talking to the Research Centre PGR Lead or the Postgraduate Research Director.

Following the raising of issues related to the supervision by the student the case will be investigated in the first instance by the Research Centre PGR Lead. The aim of the investigation in the first instance is to find an appropriate informal solution involving the student, the supervisor and any other relevant colleague or other student, such that the reason for the raising of the issue gets addressed and the related problem gets resolved. This may involve changes in the regularity of the meetings between the student and the supervisor, explanation of potential cultural differences, re-organisation of the workings of the research group of the supervisor and other similar measures.

If the problem cannot be resolved informally by the Research Centre PGR Lead the case is reported to the Postgraduate Research Director, who will investigate it further. Following this another solution of the problem may be attempted with the involvement of the student, supervisor and possibly other relevant colleagues and students. If this attempt fails, the Postgraduate Research Director may consider the appointment of a new supervisor and possibly new members of the supervisory team for the student – it is noted that this is a last resort to resolve problems between PGR students and supervisors and preferably this solution should be avoided. The new supervisor and new members of the supervisory team are appointed by the Postgraduate Research Director following consultation with the Research Centre PGR Lead and the relevant Head of School. Contacting possible new supervisors will be done by the Research Centre PGR Lead and the PGR student involved in the case should not approach potential new supervisors.

If no replacement supervisor can be appointed and the student and the original supervisor cannot find a way to continue working together (either of them may state this) the only remaining option is to offer the student to leave with support to find an appropriate supervisor at another university. The support in this case may include advice, contact information of possible supervisors and references.

The FNS policy for changing the supervisor of a PhD student is provided in Annex A1.

4.6 Leave Due to Special Conditions

In addition to the annual leave student may take leave due to special conditions such as maternity / paternity, medical conditions and jury service. In such cases the maximal length of the leave is determined in accordance with the relevant legislation and University policies, rules and regulations applicable to University employees. In the case of PGR students who receive stipend through the University, the amount of stipendiary payments to them during the period of such leave will be determined in a similar manner. In the case of PGR students who receive stipend or maintenance grants from source other than the University, but with the mediation of the University (e.g. RCUK funded students), the payments to the student during the leave period will be set according to the rules of the funder.

4.7 Withdrawal

Students may withdraw from their studies at any time. The student should communicate their decision about withdrawal from their studies to the Postgraduate Research Director in writing (e.g. by email). The communicated withdrawal decision should state the intended date on which the withdrawal decision becomes effective. Withdrawal from studies is approved and formally confirmed only after the Finance and IT Directorate, the Library and other units of the University check that the student does not owe any money to the University, does not have any books on loan, and in no

other way is expected to provide anything to the University prior to their effective withdrawal from the University. If there is any unsatisfied obligation of the student towards the University, the withdrawal confirmation will not be provided to the student until all such obligations are fully satisfied. The student status of the withdrawing student terminates at the University when their withdrawal is formally and officially confirmed by the University.

4.8 Letters and Statements

PGR students may request the issue of letters and statements in certain situations. Statements about student status (including the specification of weekly hours of part-time study) may be requested by students who may need such statements to deal with issues related to taxes or funding (e.g. sponsored international students). Student Status letters are provided by the University Student Records Office at any time. This service is provided free of charge. To obtain a student status letter please visit the Student Services Centre in the Tawney Building (you must provide your Keele card when requesting this, or go to the [web link](#) to print from e-vision. If additional information is required in the student status letter, please go to the Tawney Building to request. Please contact the PGR Administrators if you require Letters supporting the travel of international students (e.g. indicating the approval to travel) or to support requests for extension of funding by the sponsors in the case of sponsored students. Other letters and statements may be requested as well in appropriate circumstances (e.g. statement of weekly income in the case of jury service). The students should consult with their supervisor or with the Postgraduate Administrators about any letters or statements that they may need.

5. Policies and Guidelines

A1. FNS Policy on changing the supervisor of PhD students

1. Sub-sections 7.7 and 7.8 of the PGR Code of Practice state that in the case of irreconcilable breakdown in the supervisory relationship, the PGR Director must ensure that adequate supervisory support is maintained, and that supervisory responsibilities may be changed at the request of a student or a supervisor by mutual agreement between the student and the University.
2. The irreconcilable breakdown in the supervisory relationship is established by the PGR Director following gathering of information from the student, supervisor and other colleagues including the PGR Lead for the School. Normally the PGR Director meets both the student and the supervisor and investigates the nature and depth of the problem. If the PGR Director deems it appropriate, the case may be presented to the Postgraduate Committee and the Committee may reach a conclusion about the preferred course of action following a discussion. During the process of investigation all information gained is considered confidential and is not expected to be shared with other parties involved in the investigation. The reasons for the investigation and for the decision following the investigation will be communicated in sufficiently generic terms to the supervisor and the student such that the confidentiality requirements stated above are not breached.
3. The change of supervisor may be requested for a number of reasons (e.g. irreconcilable breakdown in the supervisory relationship, change in the focus of the PhD project, unavailability of the supervisor). In all these cases the PGR Director will investigate the request and will discuss it with both the supervisor and the PhD student. Following the investigation, the PGR Director decides on the appropriate action, which can be the appointment of a new supervisor (and supervisory team) or the continuation with the current supervisor combined possibly with a change of the supervisory team (e.g. changing the co-supervisor). In general, with the exception of cases where irreconcilable breakdown in the supervisory relationship is established, if it is possible to continue the project with the same supervisor, possibly with some adjustments to the supervisory arrangements (e.g. adding an additional member to the supervisory team), the preferred option is to not change the supervisor.

4. (a) If the decision is to change the supervisor, the PGR Director will communicate with the relevant Centre PGR Lead and Head of School about the identification of the possible new supervisor and other members of the supervisory team (if appropriate). The student should not make the initial enquiries themselves. The possible options will be discussed with the student and the student may be asked to meet and discuss their project with the possible new supervisors. Following feedback from the student and the possible new supervisors the PGR Director appoints the new supervisor for the student and possibly also appoints other new members of the supervisory team as well.

(b) The principle guiding the setting of the new or revised PhD project of the student, who transfers to a new supervisor, is that the project in conceptual terms belongs to the University and the previous supervisor of the student may not stop the student from re-using any conceptual element of the earlier PhD project in the context of the new or revised PhD project. If feasible the revised PhD project may be conceptually exactly the same as the earlier PhD project.

(c) The student transferring to a new supervisor may carry on working on the same project that they worked before the change of the supervisor or may switch to work on a somewhat or more substantially different project. The decision about the nature of the PhD project under the new supervisor has to be agreed by the new supervisor and should be such that the new supervisor together with the supervisory team is comfortable with the supervision of the project. The student will be allowed to carry to the new project any data that they generated during their earlier PhD research, however the previous supervisor may also use this data with full access to it. It should be recommended that existing data is published by the supervisor and student together, with the agreement of both parties. At the same time there is no expectation that the student should be a co-author on any further papers authored by the previous supervisor that relies on the data that was generated earlier. Similarly, there is also no expectation that the previous supervisor is a co-author of any further paper written by the student that relies on the data generated earlier in the PhD project. Any further access by the student to data that has been generated by the previous supervisor without the involvement of the student, will depend on the readiness of the previous supervisor to provide access to this data. If no such access and permission to use is provided by the previous supervisor, the student should not continue to use these latter data. After moving under the supervision of the new supervisor if the student needs access to use any equipment in the lab of the previous supervisor, it should be recommended that a formal arrangement be made for this with the agreement of both parties. For the previous supervisor to refuse access a special case specifying the reason(s) for refusal would need to be made. If there is any jointly authored paper by the previous supervisor and the student, which is under review, neither of them may be requested by the other to withdraw from the authorship of the paper, both of them may decide individually to withdraw themselves from the authorship of the paper, and neither of them may obstruct the publication process of the paper. If either of them suspects that the other is obstructing the publication process of a such paper, the case will be referred to the Postgraduate Research Director who will reach a decision about handling the case after consulting with relevant colleagues.

5. If there is no possible option to change the supervisor (i.e. no appropriate supervisor is available, for example due to workload limits) the student will be offered the option to continue working under the supervision of the current supervisor. The alternative option of terminating the PhD project will be also offered to the student. In the case of the termination of the project the student will be provided with references about their project and work at Keele so they can try to secure a PhD position at another university. In such cases the date of termination of the PhD studies at Keele will be agreed by the PGR Director and the student, but this cannot be later than 3 months from the date of the decision to terminate the project. In the case of students with funding from Keele University, who terminate their studies at Keele, the funding also terminates on the date of termination of the PhD studies. In the case of students who receive funding through Keele University in the context of a contract with an external funder (e.g. company, RCUK) the decision about the termination of the project has to be communicated with the external funder as soon as the decision is

reached. Contractual obligations in such cases will be clarified and implemented by the FRO Manager. In the case of international students, requirements of sponsors must be considered and any changes communicated as appropriate.

Extract from the PGR Code of Practice

7.7. The Faculty/RI PGR Committee shall be responsible for the appointment of the supervisory team prior to the student's registration. The PGR Director, on behalf of the Faculty/RI PGR Committee, is responsible for ensuring that students have continuous supervision during their period of registered study. If a supervisor is absent for an extended period, leaves the University, or if there is an irreconcilable breakdown in the supervisory relationship, the PGR Director must ensure that adequate supervisory support is maintained, including enacting alternative arrangements where appropriate.

A2. FNS policy on feedback on thesis chapters

1. During the period of writing of the PhD thesis the PhD students should receive timely feedback on their thesis chapters from their supervisory team. The student and the supervisor (or the supervisory team, if appropriate) should agree in advance the deadlines for submission of the chapters to the supervisor.
2. In the FNS it is expected that the supervisor (or co-supervisor, if appropriate) should provide feedback within 4 weeks from receiving a chapter from the PhD student.
3. If the supervisor (or co-supervisor) was unable to make the above time limit for feedback on thesis chapters then they should agree with the student an acceptable timescale in advance, before the sending of the chapters by the student.
4. If the student submits the thesis chapters with delay relative to the agreed deadlines, the supervisor should indicate, within 2 weeks, the deadline by which the supervisor (or supervisory team, if appropriate) will provide the feedback on the chapter. In such cases the feedback period may go beyond 4 weeks if there are appropriate reasons (e.g. the supervisor is away at field work or conferences or is expected to do exam marking).
5. Students may submit a formal complaint if they receive feedback from their supervisor (or co-supervisor) such that the delay between the submission of the chapter and the receipt of the feedback is longer than the delay set in paragraph 2, 3 and 4 above.

A3. FNS policy on Admission of PhD Students with Advanced Standing

1. PhD applicants with advanced standing are PhD students who started their PhD at another UK university and wish to transfer to Keele University to continue their PhD studies here.
2. PhD applicants with advanced standing can be accepted as PhD students at Keele University if
 - a) they passed their progression assessment at the university where they are currently registered as a PhD student;
 - b) they have more than 9 months left until the submission of their PhD thesis (this is calculated as 3 years after the start of their studies in the case of full-time students and appropriately scaled number of years and months for part-time and partially part-time students);
 - c) the FNS Postgraduate Committee approves their past PhD training and achievements during

their PhD training as appropriate and at least comparable to the expectations for a Keele PhD student of comparable advanced status;

d) the FNS Postgraduate Committee can identify an appropriate PhD supervisor for the project of the applicant and this supervisor is happy to supervise the project of the applicant;

or alternatively if

e) their supervisor has moved to Keele University – in this case the constraints a) – d) do not apply; however if the student has not passed the progression assessment at their previous institution they must pass this at Keele University in accordance with the relevant Keele regulations and rules; if the student has less than 6 months left until the submission of their PhD thesis the student must submit the pre-submission review prior to the submission of the PhD thesis according to relevant Keele regulations and rules.

3. The assessment of the applicant by the FNS Postgraduate Committee is normally based on a report about the applicant prepared by the PGR Lead of the relevant research centre. This report should provide the assessment of the applicant, of the applicant's PhD project, and should indicate at least one possible and willing PhD supervisor for the applicant's project.

4. A PhD student accepted with advanced standing gets registered at Keele University at a comparable stage as the one that they had at their previous university. Their deadline for submission of PhD thesis is set at 3 years from the start of their PhD studies in the case of full-time students and appropriately scaled number of years and months for part-time and partially part-time students.

5. Normally no funding will be provided to PhD students who are accepted with advanced standing. However, if the prospective supervisor has appropriate funds available these may be used to provide funding for such students.

6. If the PhD applicant with advanced standing is an international (non-EU) student who needs a study visa to study at Keele University the applicant can be accepted only if the possibility of the transfer of the student to Keele University is confirmed by the Immigration Compliance office of the University and the applicant provides all documents and information required for the transfer to Keele University.

7. The decisions by the FNS Postgraduate Committee may be exercised through Chair's action by the FNS PGR Director in cases that are not complicated or expected to become controversial.

A4. FNS policy on teaching-related work by PhD students

PGRs within FNS formally participate in the undergraduate teaching as:

- lab demonstrators
- teaching tutorials and examples classes
- marking
- fieldwork
- invigilation
- informal supervision of undergraduate students and PGRs

This provides our PGRs with the opportunity to experience and learn teaching at university level and enhance their employability. It also feeds into an important metric on "Teaching opportunities" in the biennial Postgraduate Research Experience Survey, which will be used in the "Research Environment" sub-profile in REF 2021.

While the benefits of teaching and demonstration to our PGRs is clear, however, recent issues raised by the KPA concerns around PGRs not being adequately rewarded, feeling pressurised to volunteer, paid too little for the volume of work (e.g., marking), sheer volume of marking, given major responsibility on field courses, etc.

Within FNS, Schools have variable attitudes towards the use of PGRs as demonstrators - in some cases both UK/EU and overseas PGRs contribute to demonstration and teaching, in other cases primarily home PGRs are considered, and in some cases neither home nor overseas PGRs participate in teaching. Students also perceive that not letting them demonstrate, limits their access to opportunities and reduces their employability prospects. The "Teaching Opportunities" metric within FNS was the poorest performing area with a satisfaction rating of 57.8% in PRES 2017 (58.6% within the University). Students were also least satisfied with the lack of formal training they received for their teaching.

The Faculty policy below is intended on setting out in a transparent manner expectations regarding recruitment, responsibilities, and training and support for PGRs involved in teaching activities (listed above) across the Schools and programmes within FNS. This is to ensure overall balance between teaching and research *irrespective of the student's funding status (i.e., whether fully, self or partially funded)*, keeping in mind that research should be the main focus of the PGRs.

The policy is aligned to the Graduate Teaching Assistant Terms and Conditions (PGR CoP 2014 version 4.5 Annex B10) provided in Annex B1 and HR policy on University Sessional Teaching (<https://www.keele.ac.uk/media/keeleuniversity/hr/recruitment/Session%20Teacher%20Policy.pdf>).

- Recruitment
 - PGRs contributing to any teaching activity must be formally contracted with the University as Session Teacher or Demonstrator and be paid an hourly rate commensurate with the level of work.
 - The School must follow clear, fair and transparent procedures when recruiting PGRs for teaching activities.
 - PGRs should not be pressured or coerced to perform teaching and demonstration activities irrespective of whether they are fully, self or partially funded.
 - The School should not prioritise home PGRs over EU/overseas PGRs for teaching activities in their own subject and School. Equal opportunities should be offered in each School to all PhD students.

- Roles and responsibilities
 - PGRs participating in teaching and demonstration activities must undertake the "Introduction to Teaching and Demonstration" (ITAD) training course offered by the Academic Development Unit at Keele before taking on teaching responsibilities. Heads of Schools may allow exemption based on previous relevant experience.
 - When allocating teaching and demonstration activities to PGRs, the following guidelines must be taken into account
 - Teaching activities should be no more than 6 contact hours per week on an average during semester time (a maximum of 144 hours per year).
 - Including time for preparation, this should not exceed more than 180 hours' commitment a year. Teaching duties should normally not require extensive preparation time.
 - The Head of School or appropriate member of staff (e.g., module leader) must informally discuss the proposed teaching activity and the overall load first with the Lead Supervisor of the PGRs before appointing them.
 - After receiving consent from the Lead Supervisor, the Head of School or appropriate staff member should discuss the proposed teaching activity and

the overall load with the PGRs prior to the student being allocated the responsibility.

- Clear description of the overall load and responsibilities should be provided to the student well in advance of the activity, e.g., the volume of marking and the dates, so that the PGRs can fit these around their research.
 - All teaching activity done by PGRs should be supervised by an academic member of staff. With respect to fieldwork/courses activities, the supervisor must ensure that PGRs are not given major responsibilities, e.g., supervising undergraduate students during the field trip.
 - Any informal teaching-related activity, such as supervision, whilst important to the research development of the PGRs must be not taken undue advantage of.
- Training and Support
 - PGRs involved in any teaching activity are required to attend the “Introduction to Teaching and Demonstration” (ITAD) training course. The School should ensure that they are given the time to do this.
 - If additional training is required for the PGRs (after consultation with their Lead Supervisor) to prepare them to work as demonstrators that should be organised by the Schools.
 - If PGRs wish to do the TLHEP modules (they should consult and have the agreement of their Lead Supervisor to do this) they should be supported and allowed to do these modules.

A5. FNS Guidelines and form on funding of Researcher Development and Transferable Skills Training

Guidance Notes

The Scope of the Researcher Development and Transferable Skills Training Fund

History and Background: In 2011 the University implemented a funding stream to support PGR students in their on-going career and transferable skills development. This funding is made available to PGR as part of a dedicated and protected account, within each Faculty, funded by a top-slice of all FT and PT, but not continuation, annual PGR fees. Faculties are charged with ensuring that their students are treated equitably and with getting the best value for money from this resource, with an emphasis on the pooling of resources to provide or support programmes not viable on an individual basis. Individual Postgraduate Committees advertise, allocate, manage and monitor the use of these funds in accordance with their own practices and procedures. While this funding can be made available on an individual basis, the targeting of the funds to provide courses and opportunities for multiple PGR is likely to be of far greater benefit than dissipation of the fund through widespread dedicated individual payments.

Funding available: The budget for this stream of funding is substantial and well in excess of £10,000 per academic year in FNS. Funding is only available to postgraduate research students (PGR) and not to contract research staff.

What can it be used for? Examples (not exhaustive) might include:

- ❑ Funding to attend a *Vitae* or other relevant external training course, workshop or events (including career-related training for 3rd year students). Costs will cover registration, accommodation, travelling expenses and/or material costs.
- ❑ The costs of invited speakers (e.g., from business or industry)
- ❑ The design and running of a non-subject specific skills training course or event
- ❑ Career or interview skills training
- ❑ Design, organisation and running of a collaborative colloquium or training event which may be subject specific

Although conference attendance cannot be funded by this route, the FNS PGR Committee have decided to relax this rule for the academic year 2020/21 to extend the use of the training fund to support students in attending conferences. The PGR Committee will allow a **maximum contribution of £500 towards conference attendance**. A student can apply only once in the academic year for conference attendance. You will be required to clearly highlight the main training element(s) that you will gain by attending the conference, not merely conference attendance. **The training element will still be the main criterion for evaluating the application.**

The fund is not intended to support direct research costs, equipment and research materials, and it is expected that students will obtain (or attempt to obtain) supplementary funding for their training activities from additional sources (e.g., research group funds, funding councils, industry, etc.).

All postgraduate research students (individually or collectively) are encouraged to discuss ideas with their supervisors and the School's PGR Lead first, then make proposals to the FNS PGR Committee via the application form. In general, the amount of applied funds should be not more than £500 per year per individual postgraduate research student. In exceptional cases, a larger amount may also be considered. It is expected that the supervisor of the student or the School of the student will contribute around 20% of the required funds. In exceptional cases a lower contribution may also be considered.

The FNS PGR Committee will assess each application and approval will be based on the merits and relevance of the training activity only, not the research topic or individual cost.

The assessment of the application will also be based on how actively the student has engaged with Faculty/School PGR-related activities (e.g., participation in Faculty/School research symposiums and training workshops).

Please note that the level of funding awarded via this scheme may not be the full amount requested. The decision of the approving authority will be final. Proposals will be considered either at scheduled meetings of the FNS PGR Committee or, for expediency, through an e-mail consensus of Committee members.

IMPORTANT: It is vital that you, as students, discuss the cost and nature of the training activity with your supervisors and School PGR Lead **BEFORE** submitting the application form. By submitting the form to the FNS PGR Committee you are confirming that the training activity and cost evaluation has been approved by your supervisor(s). If funding is awarded and it subsequently becomes apparent that supervisory approval has not been granted, the PGR Director has the right to withdraw some, or all, of the funding support awarded.

Final Reporting and Claiming Expenditure

Once the training activity has been completed, students should provide a brief report which should be included in their Annual Progress Review outlining the benefit that was gained from the training. The PGR Director may also request a copy of this report.

The agreed level of funding can then be claimed back by the student. Please liaise with your School

Manager and the FNS Research Office [Ms Michelle Dawson - ext 33619 or [m.dawson@keele.ac.uk](mailto:m.dawson@ Keele.ac.uk)) regarding this. **It is important to note that expenditure can only be reimbursed if validated by receipts. Please keep all receipts.** If the activity requires the use of external trainers, then please speak to your School Manager to arrange a contract.

Guidance for Completing the Application Form

These notes are intended to provide students with practical guidance on how to fill in the application form properly. However, each individual case is different and it is important that the merits and relevance of the training activity are described fully. It is these criteria that determine whether the funding is, or is not, approved.

- **Brief Description of the Training Activity:** Keep this concise yet informative. Avoid unfamiliar technical terminology.
- **Full Cost of the Activity:** Indicate the full cost of the activity, even if only approximately, so that the true value of the training can be determined. For example, if the full cost of attending an external training course is approximately £900 including travel, accommodation, registration, materials, etc., put this down as the 'Full Cost'.
- **Amount Requested:** Specify the total amount of funding support you are requesting from the fund in pounds sterling. This will be the maximum amount you will receive from the fund.
- **Justification for Funding:** Under this item you should a) itemise and describe the individual costs associated with the training activity (for the total amount requested) and b) explain, briefly, the merits and relevance of the training with respect to your own research studies. Be concise, yet detailed enough to make the 'worth' of the training clear.
- **Engagement with Faculty or School PGR-related activities:** Briefly describe how you have engaged with any relevant activities (e.g., presented at FNS or School PGR Symposium, etc.)
- **Amount and source of funding already received and/or promised to support the training activity including contribution from your supervisor or School:** You should briefly list the amount and source of any additional funds that you have gained (or been promised) to support the training activity. This may include research group funding, research council awards or industry sponsorship, registration fee waiver by conference organisers, etc.

If the requested amount is less than the full cost, you must indicate how the shortfall will be met. This may simply be a case of listing additional sources, as described, or indicating that you are paying for the additional amount yourself. Either way, it is important that the assessors can clearly see that the full cost of the activity is being met before approval is granted.

If additional funds have been promised, yet not received, by the time that the training activity takes place it is the responsibility of the Student and Supervisor to secure an alternative source of funding in order to cover the full cost of the training activity. FNS will not act as guarantor and, therefore, it is imperative that you indicate on the application form how the loss of any "promised funds" will be covered in full (e.g., by stating, for example, that the research group will underwrite the full cost of

the activity).

If you have any queries about the eligibility of your training activity, or other questions related to the training support fund, please contact your Research School's PGR Lead in the first instance or the FNS PGR Director, Dr Shailesh Naire, on ext 33268 or s.naire@keele.ac.uk.

Faculty of Natural Sciences Postgraduate Researcher Development and Transferable Skills Training Fund Application Form

Applicant Information

Name	
Research Centre (e.g., Astrophysics, Chemical Sciences, Life Sciences, etc)	
E-mail	
Lead Supervisor	
Year of Study (1 st , 2 nd , 3 rd or Continuation)	
Project Funding Source (e.g., Faculty, UKRI CDT/DTP, Self-Funded)	

Details of Training Activity (please read the guidance notes on pages 3, 4 & 5 before completing this section).

Brief Description of the Training Activity	
Full Cost of the Activity	
Amount Requested	
Date and Location of Activity	

<p>Justification for Funding</p>	
<p>Engagement with Faculty or School PGR-related activities</p>	
<p>Amount and source of funding already received and/or promised to support the training activity</p>	

--	--

Once completed, please e-mail pages 1 & 2 of this form to:

Mrs Ann Billington

FNS PGR Administrator

a.billington@keele.ac.uk

A6. FNS policy on advertising and filling Studentships

Studentship procedures within FNS must conform to University standards and we need to strictly adhere to the principles of equal opportunity and diversity.

- PGR Administrator will provide Lead Supervisors with university studentship forms, with latest logo, which contains standard text.
- In line with the guidance on the Keele Studentship site, PhD studentships that are funded internally or from external sponsors such as research councils, or from industry are advertised on <http://www.keele.ac.uk/pgresearch/studentships/> according to the standard University template (an example is shown in Annex C1). Schools/Research Centres and Supervisors are encouraged to append to this template further details of the research project as appropriate.
- PGR Administrator will also advertise on findaphd.com. Self-funded studentships will only be advertised on findaphd.com and the payment of these would need to be arranged by the School.
- The PGR Lead will liaise with the Supervisor (in the case of a Studentship associated with a named Supervisor) or Head of School/Research Director (in the case of a Studentship(s) associated with the School/Research Centre) in drafting the advert(s). The PGRD and PGR Administrator can also advise on this.
- While drafting the adverts, specific details need to be carefully considered, such as:
 - the funding available to UK/EU/overseas applicants. This will be added as appropriate except under certain situations, e.g., RCUK guidelines do not preclude certain overseas students from receiving RC-funded studentships, certain restrictions might apply to EU candidates, e.g., STFC-funded studentships allow a fees-only award to EU nationals not resident in the UK. In the case of either Faculty or School-funded studentships, international students are eligible, but will need to cover the difference between UK/EU and international fees. The PGRD can advise on this.
- In keeping with equal opportunity and diversity principles, we now also include a standard statement (see example) in all studentship adverts as follows:

“Keele University values diversity, and is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity. In support of these commitments, Keele University particularly welcomes applications from women and from individuals of black and ethnic minority backgrounds for this post. The School of [put School name here] and Keele University have both been awarded Athena Swan awards and Keele University is a member of the Disability Confident scheme. More information is available on these web pages:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/equalitydiversity/>

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/athenaswan/>

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/raceequalitycharter/disabilityconfident/> “

- Completed templates should be sent to the PGR Administrator for approval by the PGRD before uploading to the web by the PGR Administrator. The PGR Administrator will assign a studentship reference number.
- The PGR Administrator will also ensure that studentships which have passed their deadline for application are taken down from the website unless supervisors inform them that the deadline has been extended.
- All applications received by the deadline will have been seen by the PGR Administrator who will transfer it to the PGR Lead and Supervisor (for a supervisor-associated studentship) through e-Vision. All applications will then pass to the interview panel (which is required) for academic judgement before returning to the PGR Administrator.

There must always be an open competition for PhD Studentships (whether Faculty or School funded) so that all those eligible are able to apply and be given equal consideration. This will clearly not apply where a student has obtained their own funding, where there are external constraints such as an industrial or other partner only being prepared to fund a particular named candidate, or for fully self-funding students.