



Research Degree Supervisor Handbook

Abbreviations

APR	Annual Progress Review
CoP	Code of Practice
FNS	Faculty of Natural Sciences
FT	Full time
HUMSS	Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
IPCHS	Research Institute for Primary Care & Health Sciences
IPR	Interim Progress Review Report
ISTM	Research Institute for Science & Technology in Medicine
MPhil	Master of Philosophy
PGR	Postgraduate Research
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency
RI	Research Institute
SCIMS	Student and Course Information Management System

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1. General Introduction

1.1. This Handbook is intended for members of academic staff at Keele University who either serve as supervisors of research degree students (MPhil, PhD, DM, Professional Doctorates) in one of the University's five [Faculties/Research Institutes \(RIs\)](#) or who are in preparation to do so.

1.2. The research degree student-supervisor relationship is fundamental in all research degree arrangements. At the University, we recognise that the task of supervising a research degree student (or students) is both rewarding and demanding. It requires a supervisor to bring together subject expertise on one hand, and broad knowledge of the processes which surround the student's completion of their degree milestones on the other. This Handbook aims to be a detailed but accessible source of guidance on these processes, which range from those concerning the initial appointment of the supervisory team to institution-wide policies on Academic Misconduct, Equality and Diversity, Health and Safety, and Personal Relationships at Work.

1.3. The guidance provided in the Handbook ensures that Keele's procedures on supervision align with the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA's) [UK Quality Code for Higher Education – Chapter B11: Research Degrees](#).¹

1.4. Where internal documentation is concerned, supervisors should read the Handbook in conjunction with **(i)** the [Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research Degrees](#) and **(ii)** Academic Development's [Support for Researchers](#) resources (which includes information relevant to supervisors).

2. What is a Postgraduate Research Degree?

2.1. A postgraduate research degree is, at its heart, a large-scale piece of independent work which makes a fresh contribution to a research degree student's broader research field. The Doctoral Degree Characteristics Statement in [Part A of the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education](#) notes the expectation that, through their research projects, students should either **(i)** generate new knowledge or original research or **(ii)** make an original application of existing research.

2.2. The Characteristics Statement provides more granular detail on the characteristics of the different types of doctoral degree (including subject specialist doctorates, doctorates by publication, and professional doctorates). The [Framework for Higher Education Qualifications of Degree-Awarding Bodies qualification descriptor](#) sets out the requirements which both doctoral students (PhD - Level 8) and research Master's (MPhil – Level 7) should demonstrate (see also the [Code of Practice on Postgraduate Degrees](#) (Section 3.3.2)).

2.3. The onus on originality in the production or application of knowledge means that a postgraduate research degree can be stimulating and daunting for research degree students in equal measure. As supervisors, a large part of your role involves advising your students on the scope and focus of their projects, helping them to become specialists in their research areas and encouraging them to undertake their projects with an appropriate level of intellectual rigour and with due regard for good research governance and integrity. The independent nature of the work which goes into a postgraduate research degree also poses a challenge which can lead to students struggling with motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety. In this regard, your supervisory support can be vital in assisting your students to put together a manageable research plan with defined goals.

¹ Indicators 9-12 from Chapter B11 are Appendix 1 of this Handbook.

3. Research Degree Student Milestones

3.1. Introduction

3.1.1. A typical research degree student on a full- or part-time programme must progress through a number of milestones over the course of their degree. Supervisors (and students) should not view these milestones as a distraction from the principal focus on the student's thesis but as a means of structuring the research, providing regular opportunities for review and feedback, and setting out a clear timeline of what students and supervisors need to do in order for the student to complete their degree successfully within an appropriate timeframe. [Sections 3.2-3.7](#) below break down the major milestones in greater detail.

3.1.2. One of your main responsibilities as a supervisor is to ensure that your students submit their thesis within the maximum registration period. Under the terms of [Ordinance IV](#):

- Students on a full-time PhD programme have a maximum period of 48 months in which to submit their thesis; students on a part-time programme have a maximum of 96 months.
- Students on a full-time MPhil programme have a maximum period of 24 months in which to submit their thesis; students on a part-time programme have a maximum of 48 months.

3.1.3. These overarching deadlines are significant for both research degree students and the University. Where students are in receipt of funding, this funding will in most circumstances cover only a defined period (which is typically 3 years for a full-time PhD and 1 year for a full-time MPhil). Students who go beyond this period will, in all likelihood, be unfunded and could therefore have less time to dedicate to their research (e.g. in cases where students need to consider a change from full-time to part-time status). As a result, some students will struggle to submit within the maximum period. From a University perspective, maintaining a healthy completion rate is vital in order for us to remain competitive for research funding. Research Councils UK (RCUK) requires that 80% of research degree students must complete within the 48-month deadline (96 months for part-time students) for universities to be eligible for certain funding opportunities (e.g. Doctoral Training Partnerships). Failure to meet this metric would therefore prohibit the University from applying for these opportunities.

3.2. Admissions

For general reference, the Oxford Learning Institute's suite of web pages on [research supervision](#) contains detailed information on [graduate admissions](#) which you might find useful.

3.2.1. [Regulation C10](#) defines the minimum criteria for admitting a student to a research degree at the University; the Postgraduate Research '[Entry Requirements](#)' web page provides more in-depth information on qualifications and experience, Honours degree qualifications, non-standard qualifications, and English Language requirements for those applicants whose first language is not English.

3.2.2. The '[How to Apply – Postgraduate Research](#)' web page guides applicants through the admissions process. It also routes them to the [Postgraduate Research Directory](#), from where they can access information specific to individual Schools and Research Centres.

3.2.3. Applicants must complete an online application form. Unless they have shared this documentation with the Faculty/RI, the application should include the following: **(i)** the applicant's research proposal, **(ii)** copies of transcripts and certifications verifying the applicant's previous qualifications, **(iii)** two references from referees who can comment on the academic and/or professional work of the applicant, as appropriate, and **(iv)** a completed Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form.

3.2.4. Prospective students should use the same online application form for each application to study a research degree. This includes both applications in which students are making their own research proposals and applications for advertised research degree studentships. In each case, the [Admissions Team](#) in Student and Academic Services will undertake initial checks on the application before progressing it to the relevant Faculty/RI. The nature of the process thereafter, and the (prospective) supervisor's role within it, differ according to the type of application.

3.2.4. Applicants with Own Research Proposals

For applicants who have submitted an application based on their own research proposal, the process should take shape according to the steps below (although practice in each Faculty/RI could differ in slight respects, and your research area is best-placed to provide local information):

- In line with the [Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research Degrees](#) (Section 4.5), the Faculty/RI must assign at least two members of academic staff within the relevant subject area, as well as the PG/PGR Director (on behalf of the Faculty/RI PGR Committee), to consider the application.
- If the Faculty/RI decides to pursue the application, the PG/PGR Director should consult colleagues in the relevant subject area about the most appropriate colleague to act as the applicant's Lead Supervisor. It is at this stage that you may become involved in the admissions process.
- It is often appropriate to invite the applicant for an interview, which Faculties/RIs can conduct face-to-face or remotely via video conferencing software or an equivalent (e.g. Skype). In general, it is considered good practice for the nominated supervisor(s) to form part of the interview panel, but this is not mandatory (see [3.2.6](#) below for tips on the interview).
- Successful applicants should receive the standard offer letter from SCIMS, which is compliant with the QAA's [UK Quality Code for Higher Education – Chapter B11: Research Degrees](#).

3.2.5. Applicants Applying for Studentships

For applicants who have submitted an application for an advertised studentship you have offered as a supervisor, the process should take shape according to the steps below:

- As above, you should ensure that you consider each application received alongside another member of academic staff within the relevant subject area (making two specialist reviewers in total), and the PG/PGR Director of the Faculty/RI.
- If you wish to interview shortlisted applicants, you can conduct the interview face-to-face or remotely via video conferencing software or an equivalent (e.g. Skype).
- Successful applicants should receive the standard offer letter from SCIMS, which is compliant with the QAA's [UK Quality Code for Higher Education – Chapter B11: Research Degrees](#).

3.2.6. Interviewing an Applicant

Before you interview an applicant for the first time, you should complete the University's [Recruitment and Selection training](#) (either in person or online). To keep abreast of changes in policy and procedure, you should renew your training every two years.

3.2.6.1. If you are on a panel to interview an applicant, you need to give some thought to preparing for the interview and structuring the process, so that it is meaningful for both the applicant and you. Below are some tips covering these two aspects of the interview:

Interview Preparation

- What do you wish to know about the applicant (if anything) that was not contained in the application form, research proposal, and references?
- Do you expect the applicant to have any prior knowledge (e.g. of certain research methods)? If an applicant does not have this prior knowledge, could institutional or local training supplement the gap?
- What is the applicant's reason for undertaking a research degree? Does the applicant understand the level of the commitment?
- What is the applicant's reason for wishing to pursue a research degree at Keele?

Interview Structure

The bullet-points below provide a template structure for an interview with an applicant. Although the order of the individual categories is not fixed, it is a good practice to cover them in some form during the interview (alongside, or in addition to, items you wish to discuss yourself):

- **Opening Questions:** First, you could ask the applicant some initial questions about their desire to pursue a research degree. You could also ask the applicant to expand on some of the factual information listed in the application form.
- **Knowledge and Skills:** Second, you could ask the applicant questions which enable them to demonstrate the knowledge and skills required for undertaking a research degree in the subject area.
- **Personal Attributes:** Third, you could ask the applicant questions designed to draw out their personal attributes, in particular those that are important to the completion of a research degree (e.g. enthusiastic approach to challenges, problem-solving, resilience, time management).
- **Practical Questions:** Fourth, you could ask the applicant to discuss some of the practicalities of pursuing a research degree (e.g. if the application is non-studentship-related, how the applicant plans to fund the degree; if the applicant will be based in a remote location, how they plan to manage their engagement with the University).
- **Invite Questions:** To conclude, you should invite the applicant to ask any questions they have. If you are not certain of an answer, make sure you find it out and respond after the interview via email.

3.3. Milestones from First Meeting to Submission

The milestones below are for full-time students on a standard research degree programme. For part-time students the timings are doubled: the Interim Progress Review Report process for part-time students therefore takes place every **12 months**, the Annual Progress Review process every **24 months** (with three in total over the course of the degree), and the submission period falls between **72 and 96 months**. Item **3.4** below provides more detail on each milestone and provides the relevant time-point for part-time as well as full-time students.

No.	Milestone	Time Point
1	Initial PDLP Completion and Submission (+ Ethical approval and Module Registration, if applicable)	3 months
2	Interim Progress Review (IPR) Report	6-monthly
3	Literature Review Submission (ISTM, Natural Sciences, PCHS <u>only</u>)	6-8 months
4	Annual Progress Review 1 Report	9 months
5	Independent Review Panel Interview (Doctoral Progression)	Approx. 10 months
6	Annual Progress Review 2 Report	22 months (Approx. 10 months into Year 2)
7	Annual Progress Review 3 Report	Up to 34 months (Approx. 10 months into Year 3)
8	Thesis Title Submission and Examiners Approval	33 months (or 3 months before submission if before or after 36 months)
9	Continuation	From 36 months (discussion and application from 33 months)
10	Thesis Submission	36-48 months

3.4. Years 1-3

3.4.1. General: Ongoing

3.4.1.1. The process of supervising each individual research degree student is different, and the structure you put in place for maintaining regular contact and providing ongoing feedback will often be particular to the circumstances of the student. In line with the [Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research Degrees](#), you should maintain certain requirements for all students you supervise. As a minimum, you must hold a supervision meeting with your student **every 8 weeks** during term-time (and potentially outside term-time if/as circumstances dictate). **Section 4.2** of this Handbook provides detailed guidance on supervising your student, including supervision meetings and the provision of feedback.

3.4.1.2. The University also implements formal progress review mechanisms for all research degree students. The [Annual and Interim Progress Review Handbook](#) provides detailed guidance on the different Annual Progress Review stages (**3.4.2-3.4.4** below recapitulate the documentation requirements for each). As a Lead Supervisor, you will participate in the reviews for Years 2 and 3, which take the form of an interview between the student and the full supervisory team. The Year 1 process, which assesses the suitability of a student to continue at a doctoral level of study, is an Independent Review Panel interview for which you are welcome to attend as an observer provided

<p>Module Registration (if required)</p>		<p>receive approval from either: (i) one of the University's Ethical Review Panels, (ii) an NHS external Ethics Committee, (iii) a non-NHS Research Ethics Committee, or (iv) the Social Care Research Ethics Committee, as appropriate, before the project can commence. The body from which a research degree student seeks approval will differ according to the nature of the research. For more information, you and your student should consult the information about Research Ethics and make an application for ethical approval.</p> <p>You should discuss any non-compulsory modules which your student is interested in taking and, where possible, help your student to plan the additional time commitment into their work schedule.</p>
<p>Literature Review Submission</p>	<p>6-8 months from start date (FT)</p> <p>12-16 months from start date (PT)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>ISTM, PCHS, Natural Sciences, Social Sciences</u>: The Literature Review forms part of the report which a student submits for Annual Progress Review – Year 1. • If you are keen to consult with your student about the Literature Review and comment on a draft, setting a deadline between 6-8 months gives the student sufficient time to respond to your feedback before submitting it for the Year 1 review stage. • <u>Humanities</u>: The Literature Review is not a Year 1 progression-related requirement. Your local Handbook will contain details of the requirements pertaining to the Year 1 milestone, including those for disciplines such as Creative Writing, Music Composition, and Music Technology.
<p>Annual Progress Review 1 Report</p>	<p>9-10 months from start date (FT)</p> <p>18-20 months from start date (PT)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In preparation for the Independent Review Panel interview, your student should submit the Annual Progress Review 1 Report (with Sections A and B completed), report, and accompanying paperwork at least 14 days before the Independent Review Panel interview takes place. It is good practice for them to do so by the end of 9 months.
<p>Independent Review Panel Interview</p>	<p>10 months from start date (PT)</p> <p>20 months from start date (PT)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Your student should undergo the Independent Review Panel interview on which Annual Progress Review 1 at 10 months (or as close to that time-point as possible). • Although you cannot be a member of the Panel, you are welcome to observe the interview subject to the prior agreement of your student and the Panel at least 24 hours before the interview is scheduled to take place.

3.4.3. Year 2 (FT)/Years 3-4 (PT)

Milestone	Time-Point	Description
Annual Progress Review 2 Report	<p>22 months from start date (10 months into Year 2) (FT)</p> <p>46 months from start date (10 months into Year 4) (PT)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your student should undergo Annual Progress Review 2 10 months into their second year (or as close to that time-point as possible). The review takes the form of an interview with the full supervisory team. As Lead Supervisor, you are responsible for arranging the interview. Before the interview, the student must submit the Annual Progress Review 2 Report (with Sections A and B completed), their previous two Interim Progress Review Reports, and an up-to-date PDLP and least 14 days before the supervisory team interview takes place. After the interview, you should complete Section C (in liaison with the other members of the supervisory team) and submit the fully-completed form to the PGR Administrator in your Faculty/RI.

3.4.4. Year 3 (FT)/Years 5-6 (PT) + Continuation

Milestone	Time-Point	Description
Annual Progress Review 3 Report	<p>Up to 34 months from start date (up to 10 months into Year 3) (FT)</p> <p>Up to 70 months from start date (up to 10 months into Year 6) (PT)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your student should undergo Annual Progress Review 3 up to 10 months into their third year, or 3 months before submission, whichever is sooner. The review takes the form of an interview with the full supervisory team. As Lead Supervisor, you are responsible for arranging the interview. Before the interview, the student must submit the Annual Progress Review 3 Report (with Sections A and B completed), their most recent Interim Progress Review Report, and an up-to-date PDLP at least 14 days before the supervisory team interview takes place. Alongside the other members of the supervisory team, you must assess the readiness of the student to submit their thesis. This depends, in part, on their general progress and, in part, on their fulfilment of all requirements regarding research training and personal development/employability skills. After the interview, you should complete Section C (in liaison with the other members of the supervisory team, as required) and submit the

		fully-completed form to the PGR Administrator in your Faculty/RI.
Thesis Title Submission and Examiners Approval	3 months before submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You must submit the Examination Panel & Thesis Title Approval Form for consideration at your Faculty/RI PGR Committee 3 months before your student is due to submit their thesis. For a standard submission in 36 months, this would be 33 months, but could be earlier or later than this time-point depending on the timetable to completion you have agreed with your student. You can see the criteria for examiners in the Guidance on Nomination of the Oral Examination Panel (in general, examiners should be Senior Lecturers or above, have supervised to completion, and have examined at the level of the degree on at least one occasion). Thesis titles should not exceed 20 words, in line with the Guidance on the Submission of a Postgraduate Research Thesis for Examination. Once your Faculty/RI PGR Committee has approved the form, it will proceed to the Research Degrees Committee for approval.
Continuation	<p>From 36 months of start date (FT)</p> <p>From 72 months of start date (PT)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If your student is not planning to submit their thesis within 36 months, you should assist them in completing a change to Continuation Status for their writing-up period. In order to transfer to Continuation Status, Your student must complete a Change of Status Application Form. As a Lead Supervisor, you must sign and date this form to signal your approval of the transfer. The Change of Status Application Form needs approval from the Faculty/RI PGR Committee before being reported for processing to Student Records and Examinations. For this reason, it is beneficial for all parties if you work with your student to complete the two steps above in advance of 36 months (e.g. at 34 or 35 months).
Thesis Submission	<p>Within 4 years of start date (36-48 months) (FT)</p> <p>Within 8 years of start date (72-96 months) (PT)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your student's registration end date is also their submission date. In supporting your student's preparations to submit their thesis, you should be aware that, in line with the Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research Degrees and the associated guidance, students must submit the following: (i) two soft-bound copies of their thesis, (ii) an Academic Honesty Declaration Form bearing your student's signature, (iii) a Thesis Submission Form bearing

		<p>your student's signature and your own, and (iv) an eThesis submitted to exams.pgr@keele.ac.uk as a single PDF file.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• You need to sign and date Section C of the Thesis Submission Form. Within this section, you can indicate whether you have read the thesis, read part of the thesis, or not read the thesis, and that you are aware the student intends to submit and agree/do not agree with this decision. Under the provisions of Section B, your student can submit their thesis without your consultation or advice. In this event, there is no expectation that you should have completed Section C.• If your student's thesis contains confidential information, you should discuss Section E of the Thesis Submission Form with your student in the lead-up to submission. You can indicate in this Section what duration of embargo should be placed on the thesis. If you complete Section E, you, your student, and any non-academic supervisor(s) involved (i.e. an industrial sponsor) must sign and date the relevant boxes. The non-academic supervisor should also complete Section D of the form.
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3.5. Oral Examination (*Viva Voce*)

3.5.1. Once your student has submitted their thesis and is awaiting their oral examination, your supervisory support in general will focus on the examination. There is no expectation that you will meet with your student often during this period. The University does, however, encourage students to organise a mock oral examination with their Lead Supervisor to aid their preparation (this may also include other members of the supervisory team). If your student is not forthcoming in requesting one, you should contact your student with the suggestion.

3.6. Post-Examination

3.6.1. The nature of the supervisory support you provide after your student's examination depends on the examiners' recommended outcome. The seven award recommendations available to examiners are:

- **Recommendation 1:** Award the degree with no amendments to the thesis
- **Recommendation 2:** Award the degree once minor corrections have been made to the thesis to the satisfaction of the examiner(s) (3 months is the standard, with 4-6 months also available subject to the examiners providing a rationale for the longer corrections period)
- **Recommendation 3:** Award the degree, subject to the resubmission of the thesis following major corrections, to be completed within one year from the date of the Research Degrees Committee

- **Recommendation 4:** Award an MPhil, not a doctoral level award (There is no equivalent outcome applicable to MPhil students)
- **Recommendation 5:** Award an MPhil, subject to the resubmission of the thesis following major corrections, to be completed within one year from the date of the Research Degrees Committee (There is no equivalent outcome applicable to MPhil students)
- **Recommendation 6:** The student should not be awarded any degree (fail)
- **Recommendation 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

3.6.2. If your student has received a Recommendation 2, you should not need a frequent series of meetings, although individual circumstances will dictate the nature of your support. You could organise a meeting with your student a short period after their examination and offer support (if needed) in interpreting the nature of the revisions which the examiners have requested. After that initial meeting, you could agree to check your student's corrections and arrange a follow-up meeting to take place once the revisions are in place.

3.6.3. If your student has received a Recommendation 3 or 5, the level of your support will be greater than for a Recommendation 2. The PG/PGR Director will arrange a meeting for your student in order to discuss the outcome of the examination, the revisions which the examiners have requested, and a timetable of work for responding to the examiners' requested corrections over the ensuing 12 months. You could be involved in this meeting. Thereafter, you should organise periodic meetings over the 12 months to check your student's progress in making the corrections, offering support where required. Your student will, for instance, need to (re-)start paying tuition fees at the continuation rate.

3.6.4. If your student has received a Recommendation 6, you can clearly not provide further academic support but may be called upon to offer pastoral support, given the distressing nature of the outcome. In this regard, your work may include referring your student to University support services. Your student also has right to appeal against their award outcome, and you may be called upon to provide assistance in the preparation of an [academic appeal](#).

4. Supervision Processes

For each of the subsections below, the Oxford Learning Institute's suite of web pages on [research supervision](#) contains detailed information which you might find it useful to consult. This includes pages and resources for [new](#) and [experienced](#) supervisors, on [supervisory practice](#) and [supervisory style, Co-supervision](#), and on [student-supervisor relationships](#).

4.1. Criteria for the Appointment of Research Degree Supervisors

4.1.1. There is an established process for nominating and appointing members of staff to the role of Lead Supervisor of a research degree student. The process entails the completion of an [Appointment to the Supervisory Team Form](#) and its referral to your local Faculty/RI PGR Committee for consideration and approval.

4.1.2. In line with the [Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research Degrees](#) (Section 7.2), the core criteria for being approved as a Lead Supervisor are appropriate research expertise and the requisite skills to experience, monitor, and direct the student's research. In addition, you should also:

- Have completed the [Research Supervisor Development Programme](#) (see 5.2.1 below);
- Be a member of academic staff holding an open contract of employment at the University of at least 0.2. FTE;
- Be expected to remain in a research-active position within the University for the projected duration of the student's studies and be able to provide the necessary guidance and support to their research students;
- Be reasonably accessible;
- Be understanding of University and Faculty/RI policies and procedures concerning research students and supervisory responsibilities; and
- Have a minimum of three years' experience of research degree supervision, and normally have experience of supervising at least one doctoral student through to successful completion (for supervision of a doctoral student).*

4.1.3. *If you do not have three years of experience of research degree supervision, or if you have not yet completed your period of probation, your Faculty/RI should appoint a mentor as a condition of its decision to approve you as a Lead Supervisor. You can expect to have a mentor for your first few years to remain eligible for the role. This will at least cover your supervision of one student to successful completion. Your mentor must be an established supervisor with one or more successful completions to their name and a good understanding of the relevant Faculty/RI policies and procedures.

4.1.4. One approach your Faculty/RI may consider in order to introduce you to supervision (without being a Lead Supervisor yourself) is to appoint you to a student's wider supervisory team as a Co-supervisor. [Section 4.3](#) below expands on the role of Co-supervisor; in general, this member of the team will provide additional support to a student, not necessarily through subject-based expertise but perhaps based on experience of a given research methodology or other aspect related to the student's broader research topic.

4.1.5. The Faculty/RI PGR Committee can also consider the following categories of staff for the role of Co-supervisor (but **not** Lead Supervisor):

- Visiting Professors or Research Fellows (provided the member of staff holds this post for the duration of the student's degree and can maintain regular contact with the student);
- Emeritus and retired members of staff (provided the person remains research-active and can maintain regular contact with the student);
- Honorary contract staff;
- Members of staff who are themselves completing a research degree;
- Members of technical staff or Research Associates with relevant expertise and experience.

4.2. Supervising Your Student

4.2.1. Supervision Meetings

4.2.1.1. Outside of formal review mechanisms, the regular supervision meetings you have with your research degree student will be your principal means of monitoring your student's progress and identifying any issues which the two of you need to address. The [Code of Practice on Postgraduate](#)

[Degrees](#) (Section 7.11) specifies that the prescribed minimum is to meet your student **every 8 weeks**, which applies for both full-time and part-time students.

4.2.1.2. To establish and maintain an effective working relationship with your student, you should both have clear expectations of each other's roles and responsibilities, which are defined in the [Code of Practice on Postgraduate Degrees](#) (Section 6). It is also good practice to develop a process for arranging meetings (as well as postponing/cancelling them, when appropriate) which remains consistent throughout the duration of your student's degree.

4.2.1.3. If either you or your student is based at a remote location for part or all of the degree, then you should conduct your supervision meetings via telephone or a video conferencing software (e.g. Skype).

4.2.1.4. To give your student a strong platform to build from, you should aim to cover the items below in your first one or two supervision meetings:

- Agree how frequently you will meet (e.g. every 8 weeks or more often);
- Confirm the identity of each member of the supervisory team to the student and their respective roles (ensuring also that the student records this information on their PDL);
- Agree what the protocol will be for setting agendas for cancelling, and rescheduling supervision meetings;
- Introduce your student to the School/Research Centre in which they will be based, as well as the larger Faculty/RI – this should include signposting them to the Faculty/RI PGR Handbook for further information on local provision and processes;
- Introduce your student to the [Research Governance Toolkit](#) (see 4.2.4 below) and discuss the importance of research integrity and good research governance to them (including ethical approval and other considerations, if applicable);
- Discuss your student's training requirements, helping them to **(i)** identify relevant internal (and external) courses, and **(ii)** supplement the PDL with this information – it would be useful here to discuss the Faculty's/RI's core modules, and also to introduce them to Vitae's [RDF](#);
- Agree a broad set of targets for your student to achieve within the first 6 months of their degrees (in some Faculties/RIs, these targets can tie in with core module requirements such as the student's submission of a literature review).

4.2.1.5. There are no formal guidelines which govern how you and your student conduct your regular supervision meetings. One overarching expectation is that you should use the meetings to provide ongoing feedback and support to your student. You should, however, observe each of the points below:

- Ensure you organise supervision meetings in advance and diarise them, which will help you and your student to co-ordinate the production of work better and avoid the confusion which can arise from more *ad hoc* arrangements;
- Ask your student to submit some form of written work for each meeting, to provide a focus for discussion. This need not be a draft chapter of a thesis: it could, for example, take the form of a brief progress report or an account of recent research undertaken.
- Ensure that you and your student agree a clear work plan between supervision meetings to help the student structure and prioritise their research.
- Create sufficient space in supervision meetings to accommodate both academic discussion of the work and, if required, any non-academic, pastoral issues which your student has

experienced. In this regard, you could consider maintaining a list of University support services in order to signpost your student to them, if and when required.

- Encourage your student to make a record of all supervision meetings in their PDLP, in order that both parties have an *aide memoire* of actions agreed and audit trail of previous discussions and feedback. The [Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research Degrees](#) (Section 7.11) notes that you should continue this practice during any periods of corrections following your student's examination. For international students on a Tier 4, formal records of supervision meetings could evidence the 'contact points' which UKVI requests to verify the student's ongoing presence in the UK and engagement with their studies.

4.2.2. Feedback

4.2.2.1. The ongoing feedback you provide to your student through supervision meetings (and, where applicable, in the intervals between meetings) is essential to them remaining on track for completion within an appropriate timescale. This includes helping your student to pursue a research topic of manageable scope. In this regard, it is useful to keep your student aware that a completed thesis takes precedence over a perfect thesis, and that the thesis can act as a platform for more rigorous post-doctoral investigation of a subject or topic.

4.2.2.2. Research degree students can have a mixed reaction to feedback on work submitted, being at once keen to gauge their progress and somewhat anxious about possible criticism. It is therefore important that you deliver comments in a manner which is constructive and does not lose sight of the goal to which you and your student are aiming (the successful completion of an MPhil- or PhD-level thesis). The points below contains considerations for delivering feedback:

- Lead with positive comments before making recommendations for changes and improvements;
- Depersonalise your comments as far as possible so that your focus is the work itself and not your student;
- Be as clear as possible in your suggestions and avoid overly-terse or ambiguous phrasing, e.g. 'More detail here' – what precisely do you want your student to add? How much additional content do you envisage (e.g. 1-2 paragraphs, a new section or sub-section)?
- Encourage your student to evaluate their own progress and develop their own ideas about moving forward;
- Make a point of asking in each supervision meeting whether your student has understood the feedback you have supplied, and build in time for making clarifications and taking questions.

4.2.3. Being Adaptable

4.2.3.1. There is a vast literature on the subject of supervision and supervisory styles (please see the materials compiled in [Appendix 2](#)). Chances are that you will have a staple supervisory style or approach, which may have formed, in part, as a result of your own experiences as a research degree student and, in part, on the basis of the mentoring you receive, if you are a new supervisor. This is in no sense a drawback: whatever your style, your overriding priority is to forge a productive working relationship with your research degree student and supervise them to successful completion.

4.2.3.2. The need to be flexible in your approach, however, comes to bear, in particular, when considering how receptive students are to your staple style. For example, if you tend to give your student a high level of freedom over their work schedule and your student is struggling to manage their time and direction, you could amend your approach to set a series of small-scale and manageable work deadlines.

4.2.3.3. Each student you supervise has an individual set of personal circumstances which also exerts an influence on the kind of support and working relationship needed. Although there are areas of obvious overlap between them, the needs of different student groups can differ and therefore call upon you to tailor your approach. These include:

- Full-time students (both younger and mature with extensive work experience);
- Part-time students (often with work commitments);
- Students with dependents;
- International students.

However you elect to work with your student, it is good practice to review your style over the course of their degree to respond to changing demands and the need to keep the thesis on track.

4.2.3.4. Although the lists below are far from exhaustive, here are some considerations to be mindful of for part-time students and international students:

Part-time Students

- Helping your student to manage their progress on the degree alongside other conflicting demands (e.g. work commitments);
- Being open to holding supervision meetings via video conferencing software (e.g. Skype), either as the norm if your student is based at a remote location or as exception where face-to-face sessions are not practicable;
- Holding the same slot (or few slots) for supervision meetings at times you know your student can attend;
- Appreciating the long-term commitment of your student (up to 8 years) and working with them to break down the project into realisable targets, which should help to foster a sense of momentum.

International Students

- Helping your student (if new to the UK) to understand the expectations for a research degree in the UK;
- Helping your student understand the roles of each member of their supervisory team and what level of support each should provide;
- Helping your student to access English language support (around Academic English in particular) from the [Language Centre](#);
- Encouraging your student to raise issues as soon as possible to ensure their progress remains satisfactory;
- Being sensitive to your student's adjustment to life in the UK, and appreciating possible cultural differences;
- Ensuring that your student understands their responsibilities with UKVI monitoring processes at the University (monthly sign-in sheets, the three visa checkpoints each year, and notifying them that you will contact the PG/PGR Director for your Faculty/RI if they make no contact for 10 continuous working days);
- Ensuring that your student understands that international students require approval from the PG/PGR Director of their Faculty/RI if they travel outside of the UK.

4.2.3.5. If your student(s) experience emotional problems, you should ultimately signpost them to [Student Services](#) or [Counselling and Mental Health Support](#) in order for them to receive appropriate assistance with their difficulties. There are, however, a number of lower-level strategies which you could recommend to your student:

- Encourage your student to come to campus to work (at least on occasion, if practicable), to combat feelings of isolation;
- Encourage your student to interact with fellow researchers in the School/Faculty/RI, e.g. at coffee mornings or research seminars, or as contributors to an in-house blog;
- Encourage your student to consider visiting the [Keele Postgraduate Association \(KPA\)](#) and taking part in one of its suite of activities (if appropriate);
- Encourage your student to build in sufficient breaks into their work schedule, including their use of annual leave.

4.2.4. Research Governance

4.2.4.1. Research integrity refers to high-quality and robust practice across the entire research process, i.e. the planning and conduct of research, the collection and recording of data, the reporting and dissemination of findings, and the application and exploitation of findings. Throughout your student's degree, and beginning (as suggested in 4.2.1.4 above) at one of your first supervision meetings, you should take care to remind your student of the need to respect the principles set out in the [Research Governance Toolkit](#).

4.2.4.2. The Research Governance Toolkit also contains valuable guidance on research approvals and research ethics, which you and your student should consult as a matter of course. This guidance is vital if your student's project needs to secure ethical approval.

4.2.4.3. The 'Policies and Procedures' section of the [Research Governance Toolkit](#) contains details about several other governance-related documents to which you should draw your student's attention:

- **Research Compliance:** [Code of Good Research Practice](#);
- **Research Data Management:** University's Data Management and Sharing Policy;
- **Intellectual Property Rights:** Intellectual Property (IP) Commercialisation Policy.

4.3. Being a Co-supervisor

4.3.1. The role of Co-supervisor is an important one. In addition to a research degree student's Lead Supervisor, the Co-supervisor should also serve as a point of contact for the student and should have an input (agreed with the Lead Supervisor) in shaping the student's research and reviewing their progress.

4.3.2. There are local differences to the role in each Faculty/RI: there is therefore not a single, overarching, definition which covers all of its responsibilities. Colleagues serving as a Co-Supervisor for the first time should consult their PG/PGR Director and/or their local Faculty/RI PGR Handbook. However, the following core principles are applicable to all Co-Supervision arrangements:

- All research degree students must have a Co-supervisor in their broader supervisory team;
- The Co-supervisor must have some involvement in a research degree student's studies, whether it be through the provision of subject-specific expertise, methodological specialism, or pastoral support (this includes Co-supervisors based outside of the University as well as internal colleagues);
- The Co-supervisor must have a minimum of two meetings a calendar year with the research degree student;
- The Co-supervisor should be involved at decision making checkpoints for a research degree student, e.g. Annual Progress Review 2 and 3 (Co-supervisors, alongside other members of

the student's supervisory team, can also be present at the Annual Progress Review 1 Independent Review Panel interview through advancement agreement at least 24 hours before the interview takes place).

4.4. Changes in Supervision

4.4.1. The PG/PGR Director in each Faculty/RI is responsible for ensuring that each research degree student has continuous supervision during their period of registered study at the University. This means that, should there be an extended or permanent interruption to your working relationship with your student, the PG/PGR Director must look into means of continuing the provision of adequate supervisory support. This includes making a change in Lead Supervisor, if required.

4.4.2. The main scenarios in which the PG/PGR Director might be moved to change supervisory responsibilities are:

- You are absent for a prolonged period (e.g. through illness) or are leaving the University;
- You request that your student be allocated a new supervisor;
- Your student requests that they be allocated a new supervisor.

4.4.3. In line with the [Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research Degrees](#) (Section 7.8), the PG/PGR Director must ensure that, for any request to change supervision, the request is:

- By the mutual agreement of the student and the University;
- Compliant with the requirements of any sponsors;
- Compliant with University equality and diversity policies.

4.4.4. Changing Supervision (By Mutual Agreement)

4.4.4.1. If you are leaving the University, need a prolonged absence from the University, or have started a personal or romantic relationship with your student (see [6.3](#) below), you should complete the [Change in Supervision Form](#) and submit it to the PGR Administrator in your Faculty/RI. As Lead Supervisor, you should also complete this form for other changes in the supervisory team (e.g. if your student's Co-supervision arrangements need to change). The expectation when using this form is that you have consulted your student and broader about this course of action and that the decision is the result of mutual agreement. The Faculty/RI PGR Committee, or the PG/PGR Director on behalf of the Committee, will consider and approve the form.

4.4.4.2. If you are the PG/PGR Director for your Faculty/RI, then you should complete the process as described in [4.4.3.2](#). The PGR Administrator will refer the form to the Dean of Research in your Faculty/RI for consideration and approval.

4.4.5. Concerns with your Student's PGR Experience (Including Difficulties in Supervisory Relationship)

4.4.5.1. During your student's period of registered study, you may develop concerns about your student's PGR experience. This is an area which could encompass a broad range of issues, including (but not limited to):

- Difficulties the student has encountered with the research environment and/or facilities in their School/Faculty/Research Institute (RI);
- Personal difficulties the student has experienced with fellow research degree students and/or other members of academic staff in the School/Faculty/RI;
- Difficulties the student and supervisor (or another member of the supervisory team) have experienced with the supervisory relationship.

While in some cases regular meetings with your student can provide a forum for resolving any supervision concerns identified, in others you may feel the need to report your concerns if initial attempts to address the issue have not worked or you deem a matter serious enough to warrant immediate escalation.

4.4.5.2. If you wish to report a concern with your student's PGR experience (including once centred on difficulties in the supervisory relationship) you must complete the [PGR Concern Review Form](#). There is an equivalent form which students can complete to report their own concerns. The form contains provision for you to set out in Part One:

- Your concern(s) and (if relevant) any barriers you feel you have faced in resolving them;
- Your proposed solution;
- Any supporting evidence to help the PG/PGR Director (or nominee) to consider your concern, noting the nature of the documentation (e.g. email correspondence, formal letters).

You should submit your form to your PG/PGR Director, who will investigate the concerns you have reported and the solution you have proposed. The Director will, in conjunction with the Faculty/RI PGR Committee, come to a decision on the matter, which will be documented in Part Two of the form.

4.4.5.3. If you are a member of the Faculty/RI PGR Committee and have reported a concern which is being discussed at a meeting, you should absent yourself from this part of the discussion. Likewise, if you are a member of the Faculty/RI PGR Committee and are the subject of a discussion about a concern raised by your student, you should absent yourself from that part of the discussion. In this second scenario, the PG/PGR Director should contact you for comment as part of their investigation into the matter.

4.4.5.4. If you are the PG/PGR Director for your Faculty/RI and are reporting a concern related to a student you are actively supervising, then you should complete the process as described above but submit your form to the Dean of Research in your Faculty/RI, who will lead the investigation and make a decision on the outcome.

4.4.5.5. If you use the [PGR Concern Review Form](#) to request that your student be assigned a different Lead Supervisor, this will probably be the result of an irreconcilable breakdown in the supervisory relationship. Whatever the circumstances, this is a highly undesirable course of action which should represent a last resort when all other attempts to maintain the relationship have failed. As a supervisor, your agreement to take on a research degree student is expected to last for the projected duration of your student's period of registered study, and should acknowledge that any decision made about their supervision first recognises the impact on your student's studies. You therefore need to give careful thought to the decision to request a change of supervisor, since it could cause significant upheaval for your student (in particular where sponsors might require the student to be under your supervision) and have a deleterious impact on their progress.

4.4.5.6. If a breakdown in the supervisory relationship has involved bullying and harassment on the part of the student towards you, the University will pursue the appropriate action according to the [University's Bullying and Harassment Policy](#). Unless the breakdown is irreparable, one of the stated goals of the policy's resolution process is to attempt to restore reasonable relations between the perpetrator and victim.

4.5. Changes of Student Status

4.5.1. The normal expectation is that your student will retain the same registration status throughout their period of study. There are, however, a number of circumstances which might lead them to request a change in their registration. The table below details the main changes of status available to students at research degree level, together with a (non-exhaustive) list of the kinds of circumstance associated with each change and a link to the form you and your student need to complete for each scenario.

Change of Status Type	Typical Reasons for Request	Form
<p>Leave of Absence A temporary suspension of study (in general, between 1 month and 12 months in duration) which will extend your student's registration end date in line with the period of time requested for leave.</p> <p>For international students on a Tier 4 visa, a leave of absence will result in the UKVI truncating the student's visa in line with the period of leave requested. The UKVI also requires students to leave the UK during the period of their leave. Please contact the Immigration Compliance Team for advice and guidance on these cases.</p> <p>During the period of leave, your student must not receive supervision or access the University's facilities.</p> <p>In normal circumstances, a leave of absence should be a maximum of 12 months. For a request in excess of that amount, you and your student will need to make a case to your Faculty/RI PGR Committee, for the PG/PGR Director's formal approval, in line with Regulation C10 (8.6).</p>	<p>Medical reasons Maternity/paternity/adoption leave Bereavement Personal financial hardship Other personal difficulties</p>	<p>Leave of Absence Form (<i>'PGR Guidance and Forms' > 'Amendments to PGR Student Status'</i>)</p> <p>Both you and your student must complete your respective sections of the form and sign and date them.</p> <p>Your Faculty/RI PGR Committee will consider the form. If approved, your PGR Administrator will forward the form to Student Records and Examinations to be processed.</p>
<p>Extension An extension to your student's registration end date beyond the maximum periods of study set out (for full-time and part-time students) in Ordinance IV – 48 months and 96 months in turn.</p> <p>Although the needs of your student come first, an extension beyond the maximum period of study</p>	<p>Medical reasons Other personal difficulties</p>	<p>Extension Request Form (<i>'PGR Guidance and Forms' > 'Amendments to PGR Student Status'</i>)</p> <p>Both you and your student must complete your</p>

<p>affects the University's completion statistics, which can in turn impact how competitive the University is for attracting RCUK funding (see 3.1.3 above). It is therefore worth exploring in the first instance whether a leave of absence is appropriate for your student.</p> <p>In normal circumstances, a leave of absence should be for a maximum of 12 months. For a request in excess of that amount, you and your student will need to make a case to your Faculty/RI PGR Committee, for the PG/PGR Director's formal approval, before going for final consideration to Research Degrees Committee (RDC).</p>		<p>respective sections of the form and sign and date them.</p> <p>Your Faculty/RI PGR Committee will consider the form. If approved, the form will proceed to the RDC for consideration, and will thereafter go to Student Records and Examinations to be processed.</p>
<p>Continuation Defined as student's 'writing up' period, continuation signifies a period when your student will be working to complete their thesis. The expectation is that your student will have minimal access to supervision and the University's facilities during this time.</p> <p>During their period on continuation, your student needs to pay continuation fees (currently 15% of their full-time fees). The relevant Tuition Fees web pages (for UK/EU research degree students and international research degree students) contains details about the fee (e.g. amount, when expected) for a given academic year.</p>	<p>Completion of the thesis</p>	<p>Change of Status Form (<i>'PGR Guidance and Forms' > 'Amendments to PGR Student Status'</i>)</p> <p>Both you and your student must complete your respective sections (for you: Section C) of the form and sign and date them.</p> <p>Your Faculty/RI PGR Committee will consider the form. If approved, your PGR Administrator will forward the form to Student Records and Examinations to be processed.</p>
<p>Transfer in Mode of Attendance A transfer in your student's mode of attendance from full-time to part-time or part-time to full-time status.</p>	<p>Employment Medical reasons Other personal difficulties</p>	<p>Change of Status Form (<i>'PGR Guidance and Forms' > 'Amendments to PGR Student Status'</i>)</p> <p>Both you and your student must complete your respective sections (for you: Section D) of the form and sign and date them.</p> <p>Your Faculty/RI PGR Committee will consider the form. If approved, your PGR Administrator will forward the form to Student Records</p>

		and Examinations to be processed.
<p>Transfer from PhD to MPhil or MPhil to PhD A transfer in the degree for which your student is registered, from PhD to MPhil or from MPhil to PhD.</p> <p>At each Annual Progress Review stage (see the Annual and Interim Progress Review Handbook), your student can voluntarily declare a wish to alter their status from a PhD to an MPhil path. In these cases, you and your student should complete the form detailed on the right. In instances where the Independent Review Panel (in Year 1) or you as part of the supervisory team (in Years 2 or 3) make the decision that it would be in the best interests of your student to switch to an MPhil path, there is no need to complete the form. The Faculty/PGR Committee will make a final decision on the recommendation and report it to Student Records and Examinations to be actioned.</p> <p>Transfers from MPhil to PhD are uncommon, but tend to occur where a student expresses a wish to develop their MPhil research and thesis into a more substantial project. In this case, you should arrange with your Faculty/RI for your student to have go through the Annual Progress Review 1 process, including the Independent Review Panel interview. The Panel will make the decision whether the student is suitable to progress to doctoral study, which will be confirmed in the Annual Progress Review 1 Report. The Faculty/PGR Committee will make a final decision on the recommendation put forward in report and refer it to Student Records and Examinations to be actioned.</p>		<p>Change of Status Form (<i>'PGR Guidance and Forms' > 'Amendments to PGR Student Status'</i>)</p> <p>Both you and your student must complete your respective sections (for you: Section E) of the form and sign and date them.</p> <p>Your Faculty/RI PGR Committee will consider the form. If approved, your PGR Administrator will forward the form to Student Records and Examinations to be processed.</p>

5. Training and Development

5.1. Your Student

5.1.1. Alongside the need to make good progress on their thesis, to a satisfactory academic standard, research degree students must also engage with research training and personal/employability skills development opportunities. As the [Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research Degrees](#) (Section 9) makes clear, the University's commitment to this area for its research degree students takes into account national standards (e.g. the Roberts 'SET for Success' Report, the [Vitae Researcher Development Framework \(RDF\)](#), and the expectations of Research Councils UK). On its own merits, the University also considers the development and application of research, personal

development, and employability as a vital determinant in students' successful completion of their degrees.

5.1.2. The overall commitment that PhD students must make to research training across their degree is 200 hours (or two weeks per year), which comprises **(i)** subject-specific training, recommended and delivered at local level, and **(ii)** personal development and employability skills training, accessed from a range of sources (local, institutional, and external). From a University standpoint, three core online resources for both students and supervisors to be aware of are:

- The [Research Training Handbook](#);
- Academic Development's web page [Support for Researchers](#), which contains a wide range of resources as well as a definitive list of courses designed and offered for researchers;
- Research Support's [Research Governance Toolkit](#), which comprises important information about external as well as internal training opportunities.

5.1.3. The overall commitment that MPhil students must make to research training across their degree is 60-70 hours in Year 1 (for full-time students) or Years 1-2 (for part-time students). The expectations in terms of subject-specific training, and personal development and employability skills training, are the same as are outlined in 5.1.2 above. The single difference is the scaling down of the commitment in hours to match the shorter duration of the degree programme.

5.1.4. As a supervisor, you should set aside sufficient time to discuss your student's research and personal development/employability skills training in supervision meetings. How often you cover this area will depend on your student's wishes; however, it is good practice to make it a regular subject, since your student's training progress will form part of the evaluation in both the six-monthly Interim Progress Reviews and each stage of the Annual Progress Review process.

5.1.5. The main resource that you and your student will use to track their training and skills acquisition is their Personal Development and Learning Plan (PDLP), which is their record of all training and development undertaken. Your student's submission of an up-to-date PDLP is a requirement for each Interim Progress Review and Annual Progress Review: it is therefore important that your student reviews and updates this document at regular intervals.

5.1.6. The design and structure of the PDLP aligns with the domains of Vitae's [RDF](#). It is therefore beneficial for you to familiarise yourself with the RDF so that you can gain greater oversight over the wider context in which your student's training and skills acquisition is taking place.

5.2. You as Supervisor

5.2.1. In order to be accepted as a supervisor at the University, you must have completed the [Research Supervisor Development Programme](#) which Academic Development coordinates.

5.2.2. A large number of the courses listed on Academic Development's web page [Support for Researchers](#) are suitable for students and supervisors alike. There are also several sessions which cater exclusively to research degree supervisors. The titles of these sessions are headed by 'PGR Supervisors' to make clear that supervisors are the intended audience.

6. University Policies

6.1. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion

6.1.1. The University has an [Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy \(2018-2022\)](#), which aligns with the [Equality Act 2010](#) in its commitment to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other acts prohibited by the Equality Act (2010);
- Advance equality of opportunity between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

6.1.2. The ten protected characteristics the Act enshrines are: age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity (not yet applied to the whole Act); race; religion or belief; sex; and sexual orientation.

6.1.3. Insofar as it concerns your role as supervisor, general expectation is that you will engender a positive working relationship with, and environment for, your student, which does not infringe on any of the characteristics noted above. To this end, the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy prohibits you from doing the following:

- Victimisation, harassment, or bullying of a student on the basis of a protected characteristic;
- Advancement or favouring of one supervisee over another on the basis of a characteristic;
- A request to end the supervisory relationship on the basis of a protected characteristic.

6.2. Health and Safety

6.2.1. The University has a series of web pages on [Health and Safety](#), which includes a [Health and Safety Policy Statement](#) and information relating to staff working with ionising radiation.

6.2.2. Staff in a supervisory position, which includes research degree supervisors, are responsible for the health and safety of the people, activities, and projects under their supervision. You must, therefore, be aware of the health and safety issues which pertain to your student's activities and projects. You must also comply with the University's health and safety expectation and any local arrangements within your Faculty/RI or Research Centre.

6.3. Personal Relationships at Work

6.3.1. The University's [Personal Relationships at Work Policy](#) aims to ensure fairness and consistency in the management of personal relationships at work and, in such circumstances, to protect the wellbeing and interests of students and staff. Sections 4 and 5 of the Policy concern relationships between staff and students.

6.3.2. The University discourages staff, including supervisors, from:

- Using their professional position to pursue a [romantic/sexual] relationship with a student, and to pursue such a relationship on the basis of an implicit or explicit promise of preferential treatment or an implicit or explicit threat of detrimental treatment;

- Entering into a relationship with a student or students which is incompatible with the trust involved in the staff/student relationship;
- Putting themselves in a position where their behaviour could be construed as exceeding professional boundaries.

6.3.3. You must report to your line manager cases where **(i)** you are involved in a pre-existing personal relationship with a student, and **(ii)** you become involved in a romantic/sexual relationship with a student. In both instances, the line manager should ensure clear professional separation between the student concerned and you (including changes of supervisor, where required).

6.3.4. If the University becomes aware that you have not declared a relevant personal relationship, it will take action to investigate the situation. This may result in the matter being reviewed formally in accordance with the University's disciplinary procedure. If you declare a relationship, you will not be disadvantaged professionally by making such a declaration, but if you repeatedly engage in personal relationships with students, the matter may be reviewed formally in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

Appendix 1

References and Reading on Supervisory Practice

Vitae webpage for supervisors: <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/spotlight/supervising-and-managing-researchers-1/supervising-and-managing-researchers>

Pat Cryer website – a range of resources for students and supervisors themed around frequent dilemmas. <http://www.postgradresources.info/index.htm>

UK Council for Graduate Education has just produced a research supervisors bibliography. <https://www.ukcge.ac.uk/>

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Wisker, G. (2007). [The Postgraduate Research Handbook: Succeed with your MA, MPhil, EdD and PhD.](#) (Second ed.). Basingstoke: Palgrave. (Palgrave Study Guides).

Zhao, C., Golde, C., & McCormick, A. (2007). [More than a signature: How advisor choice and advisor behaviour affect doctoral student satisfaction.](#) *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 31(3) 263-281.

Articles on doctoral supervision, including taught doctorates, are frequently published in the following journals: International Journal for Researcher Development, Studies in Higher Education, Teaching in Higher Education, Higher Education Research and Development.

Appendix 2

Further Information

Governance

- Link to the Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research Degrees: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/research/currentpgrstudents/pgrcodeofpractice/>
- Link to the University Regulations: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations/>
- Link to Ordinance IV (on maximum registration periods for research degree students): <https://www.keele.ac.uk/sas/academicervices/governance/actcharterstatutesordinancesandregulations/universityordinances/ordinanceivawardsandconfermentofdegrees/>

Students

- Link to the web page for prospective PGR students: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/pgresearch/>
- Link to the current PGR student webpages (including 'PGR Guidance and Forms'): <https://www.keele.ac.uk/research/currentpgrstudents/>
- Link to the Research Directory: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/research/researchdirectory/>
- Link to the web page on 'How to Apply': <https://www.keele.ac.uk/study/postgraduateresearch/applications/>
- Link to the Keele Postgraduate Association (KPA) website: <http://kpa.org.uk/>
- Link to the KeeleSU website: <https://keelesu.com/>

Sector Resources

- Link to the QAA's Quality Code: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>
- Link to Vitae's Researcher Development Framework (RDF): <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework>
- Link to the Oxford Learning Institute's web pages on research supervision: <http://supervision.learning.ox.ac.uk/admissions>