

University of Sussex
Academic Registry

Handbook for Research Supervisors and Directors of Doctoral Studies 2015-16

The logo consists of the letters 'US' in a white, serif font, positioned in the bottom left corner of the red abstract background.

University of Sussex

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1 Introduction

The primary purpose of this Handbook is to act as a helpful reference source by drawing together into a single handbook all the key University-level documents, policies and procedures relating to research degrees. This Handbook sets out the University of Sussex's framework for managing all full-time and part-time postgraduate research degrees. It defines the minimum requirements consistent with the University's commitment to providing high standards of supervision within an active and supportive research environment. This Handbook is intended to complement the other main University-level handbook, the *Handbook and Regulations for Doctoral Researchers*, also produced by the Research Student Administration Office and geared more specifically to the needs of research students.

University-level policy regarding research degree matters is normally approved by Doctoral Studies Committee (DSC) and Doctoral School Board (DSB) in consultation with the Schools and the Research Degrees Examination Board. Please note that the provisions set out in this handbook are correct at the time of writing, but that there may be further procedural changes approved by Doctoral Studies Committee during 2015-16 that will not be fully reflected until the next edition of this handbook.

The Research Student Administration Office maintains a website with specific guidance and information intended for research students, their supervisors and examiners. All the University-level forms and instructions that are required at each stage of the doctoral degree process are available here: www.sussex.ac.uk/rsao

The Research Student Administration Office co-ordinates an annual programme of training events for research supervisors, designed to meet the needs of both those who are new to supervision as well as those who are more experienced. A suite of blended learning activities comprising both online modules (available through Study Direct) and facilitated workshops are offered each year to promote best practice across the University using both external and internal facilitators. The training combines updates on changes to policies and regulations with more reflective workshops on the nature of the modern doctorate and the international context of doctoral research. See the Staff Development Unit webpage for course listings: www.sussex.ac.uk/staffdevelopment/opportunities/staffdevelopmentcourses

A set of online modules produced by Epigeum, Supervising Doctoral Studies, will be launched from October 2015 and will take supervisors through the institutional and external context of research degrees while highlighting University policy in each type of supervisory situation. Completion of the modules will be compulsory for new supervisors and those completing the PGCert HE; they can be accessed via Study Direct.

2 The structure of postgraduate research education at the University of Sussex

Postgraduate research education at the University of Sussex is largely organised within Schools and departments, and in some cases, within interdisciplinary research units. Responsibility for research students within each School resides with a Director of Doctoral Studies. The School Director of Doctoral Studies sits on the University Doctoral Studies Committee.

Overall responsibility for determining the University's research student agenda lies with the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research), who chairs Doctoral School Board, in consultation with the Doctoral Studies Committee, chaired by Director of the Doctoral School). All School Research Degree Committees report to Doctoral Studies Committee, as do the Research Degrees Examination Board and the Professional Doctorates Examination Board. As the University offers joint degrees with the University of Brighton through the Brighton and Sussex Medical School there is also a Joint Research Degrees Approval Board. The terms of reference for each committee are set out in the Appendices.

3 Key sources of support for research students

Most of a research student's day-to-day contact will be at the local level and provided via their department or interdisciplinary unit. The primary source of academic support will be via their main supervisor(s). In addition, each department or interdisciplinary unit will have a person with overall responsibility for research degree students within that unit. If not the Head of Department, this person will commonly be known as the Research Convenor. There will be many areas, however, where final approval or authorisation is required by the Director of Doctoral Studies at School level.

Sources of advice and support outside the School

To supplement sources of academic support and advice, assistance is also available in relation to problems or queries of a more personal nature. The arrangements for general student welfare are set out in the Student Handbook which is available at www.sussex.ac.uk/studenthandbook

In addition there are a range of support services which provide advice and help to students across the University. Students need not be formally referred to any of these services but supervisors should be aware of the range of support and advice offered in order to signpost students to the appropriate unit.

Student Support Unit

The Student Support Unit is a team of specialist advisors who work with students who may need support at the university due to a long term condition, such as disability, learning difficulties or mental health problems. For more information, see: www.sussex.ac.uk/studentssupport

Student Life Centre

The Student Life Centre offers information and advice to all Sussex students. Their aim is to help students to gain the best university experience they can, whatever their circumstances, by ensuring that if they encounter problems they receive appropriate guidance and support. For more information, see: www.sussex.ac.uk/studentlifecentre/index

International Student Support

Coming to study in the UK is an exciting experience, with opportunities to broaden students' academic, social and cultural horizons; we also recognise that it can be a time of anxiety, especially when students are making arrangements to leave home. The International Student Support office aims to offer a high level of support to ensure that study at Sussex is as rewarding and problem-free as possible. For more information, see: www.sussex.ac.uk/internationalssupport

Careers and Employability Centre

The Careers and Employability Centre is part of Student Services at the University of Sussex, and works within the University's equality and diversity policy. The Centre runs training courses specifically for doctoral students. For more information, see the Researcher's Guide to the Careers and Employability Centre: www.sussex.ac.uk/careers/aboutus/publications/resguidebkt

Researcher Development Programme

The opportunity to acquire relevant skills, not just in order to successfully complete the thesis, but also to aid future career development, is now increasingly recognised as an important component of research degree programmes. At Sussex, a programme of courses tailored to meet the skills training requirements of doctoral students has been specially developed. In addition to courses designed to assist with completion of the thesis – e.g. on writing and planning a thesis, and on preparation for the viva – the programme also includes courses to support development of more general transferable and career management skills. Towards the beginning of their studies, research students should agree with their supervisor(s) their skills training requirements using a training needs analysis; training needs should be reviewed at regular intervals, including during the annual review process. For more information please see: www.sussex.ac.uk/doctoralschool/internal/researcherdev/

Academic Development

Academic Development workshops and one-to-one tutorials are available free of charge for students for whom English is a second or additional language. The workshops also offer guidance on academic referencing and plagiarism. The aim is to raise students' awareness of academic practice, language and culture. The sessions are run through the Sussex Centre for Language Studies <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/languages/>

Sources of advice and support within the School

Director of Doctoral Studies

The role of the Director of Doctoral Studies is to assist the Head of School in ensuring that the University's and School's strategic and operational plans for research students are achieved, to include meeting the growth agenda; to play an essential role in ensuring that the standards set for doctoral students and supervision are maintained, and to provide leadership in developing new initiatives and formulating policy on matters relevant to research students and research training. The Director of Doctoral Studies also usually oversees the admissions process for doctoral students within the School, though Research Convenors may also play a key role.

Director of Student Experience

The role of the Director of Student Experience is to assist the Head of School in ensuring that the University's and School's strategic and operational plans for student support are achieved; to provide leadership in developing and contributing to policy determined at University level under the direction of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) and also by the School's senior management team, in the areas of student support and the student experience, to include helping ensure consistent practice across the University.

Research Convenor

Some departments have a Research Convenor who assists the Director of Doctoral Studies. In these cases, the Research Convenor is responsible for the allocation of supervisor(s), oversight of supervisory arrangements for research degree students in the department or research centre, liaison with the Director of Doctoral Studies over any changes of research supervisor, organisation of departmental arrangements for the annual review of research students and submission of a departmental report to the Director of Doctoral Studies on the outcome of reviews conducted by the department.

Research and Enterprise Co-ordinator

The Research and Enterprise Co-ordinator is part of the School administrative team and is responsible for local induction arrangements, maintaining records of research students and supervisory arrangements including reporting on frequency of supervisory contact, assisting with the planning of the annual review and viva, assisting with the administration of studentships, and processing expenses for doctoral students.

PGR student reps

The Student Rep scheme is co-run by the University of Sussex and the University of Sussex Students' Union. Student Reps provide an essential link between Students, the Union and the University. PGR Student Reps are Postgraduate students, elected by Sussex University students and by Brighton and Sussex Medical School students to represent the views and interests of students in their subject Reps find out about issues impacting on students' studies and experience. They may raise these informally with individual members of staff

or more formally at department, school, and university level committees in order to effect positive change.

There is a strong tie between Student Reps and Student's Union School Councillors, to ensure that important issues feed in to the decision making processes of the Students' Union. A number of Student Reps are elected to hold positions on University committees to raise issues at a higher level. Find out more about the scheme here:

www.sussexstudent.com/studentreps

4 Admitting new research students

Admission to all research degrees is formally overseen by the Research Student Administration Office. Potential research students must apply for admission via the University's online application portal PG Apply

www.sussex.ac.uk/study/pg/applying/

In order to complete their application, applicants will need to choose a research degree course from the prospectus (www.sussex.ac.uk/study/pg/) and meet the admissions requirements set out for the specific course. A list of non-UK qualifications accepted by the University can be found in the online prospectus. For international students, English language levels are set institutionally and comply with UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) sponsor guidance. Home and Overseas tuition fees are listed with each course in the prospectus.

Applicants must also submit a research proposal as part of their application and guidelines on what is required for each School are set for applicants on the online application system.

There are three entry points during the year for research students, in September, January and May. Not all subjects admit students at all entry points but this is made clear in the prospectus. Exceptionally a student may be admitted at another point in the year if the funder requires a specific start date, and this must be approved by the Research Student Administration Office. An applicant offered a place may defer their start date up to a maximum of one year. The application system does not close and there is no deadline for applications. However please note that applicants who are also applying for funding will often require proof that they have been offered a place to study at the University before they can be considered for a studentship. Many external and internal funding deadlines are in January and February so those applying to begin their research degree in September will need to have applied in good time.

Applicants will often have been in communication with a potential supervisor before they make an application for a place. Once the application has been submitted it is the responsibility of the relevant School (usually the Research and Enterprise Co-ordinator) to send the application to relevant selectors/supervisors for a decision. The Research Student Administration Office will process the offer letter, verify the applicant's qualifications and help them to apply for a visa, where necessary. Please note that an offer letter will not

be produced until the names of two supervisors have been provided by the School. Research students pursuing a doctoral degree at another institution may come to Sussex as a Visiting Student without graduating with our qualification. Visits may last between one month and one year, and fees are charged pro-rata. The application process is the same as for students who are applying to Sussex for their whole doctoral degree.

5 Criteria for selection of research degree students

In selecting research students, Schools must ensure that the following criteria are met:

Essential

- A performance in a first degree or, where appropriate, in a field of educational, professional or industrial experience relevant to the research, that suggests the student could successfully complete a research programme;
- An area of research within the University's expertise;
- A proposed area of research which, based on the information available, is capable of being studied to the depth required to obtain the degree for which the student is registered;
- A proposed area of research which, based on the information available, is capable of being completed within the timescale designated for it and for which proper supervision can be provided and maintained;
- A proposed area of research for which, based on the information available, appropriate University resources (e.g. library, computing, laboratory facilities, technical assistance), an appropriate research environment, and sufficient student resources (e.g. funds to cover field trips) are available;
- Satisfactory recommendations from external referees.
- A level of competence in English sufficient to undertake the research satisfactorily (or a requirement to undertake the language tuition identified as necessary prior to and, where appropriate, post registration as a research student).

Recommended Good Practice

- Evidence of research skills;
- A satisfactory outcome at interview with potential supervisor(s) and other appropriate faculty.

6 Criteria for selection and appointment of supervisors

- All members of the supervisory team must have a doctoral degree, or equivalent research experience; the main supervisor must be active in research in an area relevant to the proposed PhD project;
- The main supervisor must be a full- or part-time employee of the University and must continue to supervise the student to submission unless they leave the University;

- A main supervisor should usually have supervised at least one PhD to successful completion; however, if the supervisory team includes a member of faculty with the appropriate experience, a new supervisor may act as a main supervisor with the co-supervisor maintaining oversight of progress of the supervision and providing mentoring as appropriate;
- In appointing the supervisory team, it is essential to consider the research expertise as well as supervisory experience of different members;
- The current PGR load of each member of the supervisory team should be considered by the relevant member of the School (HoS/HoD/DDS/Research Convenor) before supervisors are assigned;
- The appointment of an external supervisor will be approved in exceptional circumstances when a case justifying the appointment is made to the Chair of Doctoral Studies Committee. An external supervisor may not be the primary supervisor.

7. Supervisory arrangements

It is recognised that different models of supervision will be in place across schools and departments. Whatever arrangements are in place, however, schools and departments must ensure that the following requirements are met:

- There must be a single identified point of contact both for the student and for administrative purposes. This person will be known as the 'main supervisor';
- There must be an 'additional supervisor' able to provide advice and support when the main supervisor is not available. This role may be performed via a joint supervisor, co-supervisor, or by someone drawn from within a wider supervisory team. Recommended practice is that there should be more than one supervisor with whom the student can expect to have regular access or contact;
- Two supervisors must be specified to the Research Student Administration Office at the time an offer is made to the student. The additional supervisor should also be specified to the Research Student Administration Office at the time an offer is made to the student, or at the very latest by the end of the student's first term. Schools have responsibility for notifying the Research Student Administration Office of the names of the main and additional supervisor;
- Either the main or additional supervisor should be currently engaged in research in the relevant disciplines;
- Members of staff who have a role in supervision of research students should be suitably equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge in order to support such students effectively;
- In the event of loss of the main supervisor, an appropriate replacement should be found appointed by the Director of Doctoral Studies and reported to the Research Student Administration Office. Where there is any delay in the

finding of a replacement, the main supervisor must ensure that suitable arrangements are in place to support the student during the interim.

Number of Students

No supervisor should undertake as main supervisor the supervision of more than a limited number of students. The limit will vary from one subject to another and according to factors such as a supervisor's experience and other duties, but each School should have a normal maximum to be exceeded only in exceptional circumstances. A maximum number of 6 FTE research students is suggested (to be exceeded only in exceptional circumstances with the agreement of the Director of Doctoral Studies).

Frequency of Supervision

Schools should state clearly the character and frequency of research supervision that a student can expect with his or her supervisor(s). At minimum, there should normally be at least one formal meeting (or equivalent) each month between the supervisor and student. For international students studying in the UK on a visa sponsored by the University, monthly supervision is a minimum requirement of the UKVI. Supervision meetings should be recorded on Sussex Direct.

8. Responsibilities of research degree supervisors

- The main supervisor is directly responsible in their role as supervisor to the Director of Doctoral Studies and, through that officer, to the Head of School.
- The main supervisor (or co-supervisor in the case of joint supervisions) is expected to provide the student with advice at every stage in the planning and conduct of research and in the writing of the thesis and to ensure, through the Director of Doctoral Studies, that replacement supervision is available in the event of any significant period of absence. The more specific responsibilities of the main supervisor are as follows:
- within 3 months of first registration, to organise a meeting with the student to discuss the Researcher Development Framework;
- to keep a record of supervisory meetings using the online system;
- to approve and pass on to Director of Doctoral Studies a research plan (or School equivalent) produced by the student; which must be approved by the supervisor and Director of Doctoral Studies; Schools will have specific requirements and timing but this must be completed by the end of the second term of study at the latest;
- to complete an annual report on the student's progress for consideration within the framework of the school and/or department's annual review procedures, for later submission to the Director of Doctoral Studies;
- to provide advice and support to the student on the preparation of a suitable thesis research outline during the first year of their study, in accordance with School procedures;
- to request written work as appropriate, and return such work with constructive criticism and within reasonable time;
- if working in a potentially hazardous research environment, ensuring and monitoring that the student possess adequate technical competence in any relevant research techniques, so that he or she presents no undue risk to themselves, others, and/or University facilities;
- to give detailed advice on the necessary completion of successive stages of work so that the whole may be submitted within the scheduled time;
- to ensure that the student is made aware of inadequacy of progress or of standards of work below that generally expected;
- to identify prospective external examiners.

The more general responsibilities of those involved in the student's supervision are as follows:

- to agree a schedule of regular meetings with the student, in accordance with School policy and in the light of discussion of arrangements with the student;
- to be accessible to the student at other appropriate times

when he or she may need advice;

- to give guidance about the nature of research and the standard expected, the planning of the research programme, literature and sources, attendance at taught classes, requisite techniques (including arranging for instruction where necessary), and the problem of plagiarism;
- to be familiar with the standard expected of research degree examiners, consistent with the guidance laid down by relevant Research Councils;
- to arrange as appropriate for the student to talk about his or her work to faculty or graduate seminars, and to be well briefed about the procedures involved in oral examinations;
- to provide clarification on the guidance or comment that will be offered on the student's written submissions;
- to ensure that the student is aware of the University's Codes of Practice for Research and Intellectual Property and that he or she adhere to the requirements and observe the principles contained therein;
- to advise on the need for training in the ethical, legal and other conventions used in the conduct of research, and supporting the student in the consideration of these as appropriate.
- to ensure that the student is aware of institutional-level sources of advice, including careers guidance, health and safety legislation and equal opportunities policy;
- to maintain and develop the necessary skills and expertise in order to perform all facets of the role effectively (including taking up appropriate continuing professional development opportunities).

9. Responsibilities of research degree students

The responsibilities that must be observed by research degree students are as follows:

- maintaining regular contact with the main supervisor;
- within 3 months of first registration, to organise a meeting with the supervisor to discuss the Researcher Development Framework;
- to prepare a research plan (or School equivalent) which must be approved by the supervisor and Director of Doctoral Studies; your School will inform you of specific requirements and timing but this must be completed by the end of the second term of study at the latest. The research plan must include your most recent Training Needs Analysis;
- discussing with the supervisor/s the type of guidance and comment which will be most helpful, and agreeing upon a schedule of meetings;
- keeping a record of supervisory meetings using the online system;
- taking the initiative in raising problems or difficulties, however elementary they may seem;
- for the safety of themselves and others, students working in a potentially hazardous research environment must take the initiative to ensure that they are competent in any relevant research techniques to be used. Those travelling to potentially unsafe areas for fieldwork need to obtain insurance accordingly;
- preparation of a research outline to be approved during the student's first year of study;
- planning a research project which is achievable within a schedule consistent with the normal expectations of the relevant Research Council, and maintaining progress in line with that schedule;
- maintaining the progress of work in accordance with the stages agreed with the main supervisor, including in particular the presentation of written material as required in sufficient time to allow for comments and discussion before proceeding to the next stage;
- providing annually a brief formal report to the Director of Doctoral Studies as part of the annual review process;
- deciding when to submit the thesis, taking due account of the supervisor/s advice, and of University requirements regarding the length, format and organisation of the thesis;
- taking responsibility for their own personal and professional development;
- agreeing their development needs with the main supervisor at the outset of the programme, reviewing these on an annual basis, and attending any relevant development opportunities so identified
- being familiar with institutional regulations and policies that affect them, including the regulations for their qualification

- being aware of the University's Codes of Practice for Research and Intellectual Property and adhering to the requirements and observing the principles contained therein.

A student who considers that his or her work is not proceeding satisfactorily for reasons outside his or her control should discuss the matter with the supervisor/s and, failing satisfaction, with the Director of Doctoral Studies and/or Research Convenor who will advise on any grievance procedures. In particular, the student should ask to meet the Director of Doctoral Studies if the student feels that he or she is not establishing an effective working relationship with the supervisor/s, bearing in mind that the alleged inadequacy of supervisory or other arrangements during the period of study would not constitute grounds for an appeal against the result of a research degree examination unless there were exceptional reasons for it not having come to light until after the examination, in which case it might be considered.

10. Responsibilities of Heads of Departments or Research Convenors where applicable

The Head of Department, or where delegated, the Research Convenor, is responsible for the following functions:

- The selection of research degree students (in accordance with the approved University criteria set out in section 3.1 above); the recommendation to the Director of Doctoral Studies that an offer be made to a selected research degree student.
- Allocation of supervisor(s) in accordance with the procedures and requirements for the appointment of research supervisors identified in section 5.1 above. Recommendation for the appointment of supervisor/s to the Director of Doctoral Studies.
- Oversight of supervisory arrangements for research degree students in the department
- Liaison with the Director of Doctoral Studies over any changes of research supervisor.
- Organisation of departmental arrangements for the annual review of research students
- The DDS has oversight of these departmental or School arrangements

11. The first year: induction for research students

Departments should ensure that new research students meet, as early as possible, their supervisor/s, and the Research Convenor responsible for research students within that unit. In addition to a wider induction of students by the University (e.g. introduction to the Library and the Computing Service), departments should arrange meetings for new students presided over by Directors of Doctoral Studies (or nominees) at which students should be familiarised with *The Handbook and Regulations for Doctoral Researchers*. A more informal, social gathering should also be arranged at which current postgraduates and appropriate faculty will be present.

12. Ongoing support, development and guidance for research students

Schools and departments should:

- provide guidance on the resources and facilities available to postgraduate research students and on general aspects of writing a thesis including, for example, the presentation of research outlines.
- provide training in research techniques and, where appropriate, in the use of the necessary apparatus.
- provide (or arrange for) training in skills related directly to the students' research and ensure that adequate guidance is given if the student becomes involved in teaching
- ensure that students make formal presentations of work-in-progress and are notified of opportunities to present papers at meetings.

- ensure that students are provided with suitable guidance on preparation for their viva-voce examination (e.g. by attendance at suitable lectures/seminars, participation in 'mock vivas' or reference to relevant written guidance materials)
- make clear whom, within the department, research students should contact regarding any problems, including difficulties with a supervisor, and make clear that counselling and medical services are available.

13. Research plan or outline

Research students must prepare an outline of the thesis (or School equivalent) for consideration during the first year of their study. Schools will identify the deadline for completion of the outline (e.g. end of first term). A form to confirm the content and title of the student's thesis and research outline must be submitted by the student and supervisor(s) to the Director of Doctoral Studies. Any subsequent changes in the title or research topic will be valid only when approved by the Director of Doctoral Studies of the relevant School on the recommendation of the main supervisor.

14. Annual review and progress reports

All research degree students, and their main supervisors, must complete written Annual Progress Reports. Students are entitled to see the report written by their supervisor. The student may specify whether or not the supervisor may be given access to their report. In addition, a formal Annual Review meeting should be scheduled between the student and at least one other person nominated by the Director of Doctoral Studies who is not the main supervisor (normally someone acting in this capacity at departmental level – e.g. this could be the Research Convenor). The main supervisor may also attend with the agreement of the Director of Doctoral Studies. Following completion of the annual review process, students should emerge with a concrete idea of how their research is progressing, with definite objectives for the coming year and a timetable for achieving those objectives.

It is recommended practice that the reports and notes of outcomes of annual review meetings are reviewed by department or School-level groups with a good spread of supervisory experience. As well as gaining a shared update on the progress of research students within the School/department, this group can usefully filter the cases of students whose progress is satisfactory from those whose progress gives some cause for concern and/or whose supervisory arrangements or technical support need to be addressed. This group should forward the bundle of reports to the Director of Doctoral Studies with a short covering report that flags the cases where progression is problematic or there are other issues requiring attention. This group should also look specifically to see whether the training requirements identified during the initial and continuing training assessments are being fulfilled by candidates.

The Director of Doctoral Studies is formally responsible for approving (or not) the progression of all research students in their School. The DDS may assemble a School-level research degree group to assist with this process (membership of such a group does not prevent a member of faculty from subsequently acting as an internal examiner for the student/s being reviewed). The Director of Doctoral Studies is responsible for instigating appropriate follow-up action in cases where there are concerns emerging from the review process.

If progress is deemed to be satisfactory and no change to the registration status is recommended, Directors of Doctoral Studies should sign the relevant annual review report, as directed by the Research Student Administration Office and return it to that Office by the end of July.

15. Unsatisfactory progress

If a student's progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory, there are three options for the School to consider. These are set out below and in the *Handbook and Regulations for Doctoral Researchers*:

- 1) The student may be offered a period of provisional registration. The School will set the conditions that the student must meet by the end of that period (e.g. completion of a chapter) in order to progress and be fully registered;
- 2) The student's registration may be transferred (downgraded) from PhD to MPhil;
- 3) The student may be refused permission to register in the following academic year.

This policy concerns Option 3, the refusal of permission to register in the following academic year, and sets out the procedure that the School should follow in preparing the report on the annual review and academic progress, including the rationale for the recommendation to refuse registration. The final decision is taken by the Chair of Doctoral Studies Committee.

A departmental review group (or School equivalent) should produce a report on:

- a) the student's academic progress;
- b) the annual review process for each year of the student's registration;
- c) issues relevant to the student's progress arising outside of the annual review process.

The completed report is then forwarded to the School Research Degree Committee. The purpose of the report is ensure and demonstrate that:

- a) the student has received appropriate supervision and support from the supervisors, School and the University;
- b) the student has been informed that he or she is deemed to be making unsatisfactory progress and given an opportunity to improve the work in order to reach a satisfactory standard (e.g. to demonstrate that the student has been given clear

and timely advice on work submitted);

- c) the student has been kept informed of the annual review process and understands its possible outcomes.

The report should include a review of the student's period of study at Sussex, based on:

- a) annual review reports from supervisor(s) and student and the thesis panel (or School equivalent) report for each academic year
- b) relevant correspondence with the student about his or her academic standing;
- c) the online supervisory record.

It is essential that the report consults all available records of the student's progress (not only the records for the year following which deregistration is proposed) and highlights any concerns raised by the student and/or the supervisors during the period of study. Missing or incomplete annual review/panel reports, incomplete supervisory records or missing correspondence should be highlighted. This report should then be forwarded to the Research Student Administration Office.

The Director of Doctoral Studies should review the report and highlight any issues to the review group and for discussion at the School Research Degrees Committee. If the Committee accepts the recommendation for deregistration, the minute from RDC to the Research Student Administration Office should clearly state that the above procedure has been followed; the minute should also note any issues arising from the DDS's review of the report and the action taken to clarify or resolve those issues.

16. Intermission

Intermission is a break (temporary withdrawal) from doctoral study for which a student may apply on medical or personal grounds. Intermission may be taken in periods of months, up to a maximum of one year in total. Intermission must be approved by the supervisor and the Director of Doctoral Studies and reported to the Research Student Administration Office who will inform the students of their responsibilities with regards to their return. Retrospective intermission is not permitted and students must apply in advance. During a period of intermission, the student will not be registered with the University and may take up full time employment. Intermission is not a right and conditions may be set by the supervisor for the student's return. See below additional regulations around Authorised Absence for Tier 4 students.

17. Pre-submission status

If progress is deemed to be satisfactory and the recommendation is that the student proceed to pre-submission status (formally known as continuation status), the relevant application form should be completed by the student and signed by the main supervisor, and approved by the Director of Doctoral Studies. Pre-submission status is not

normally approved before the completion of three years full-time study or five years part-time study.

Before a transfer to pre-submission status can be approved, the supervisor must be assured that all data has been completed, that analysis is substantially complete, and that no further empirical work is required. In lab-based subjects this is especially important as the same level of insurance does not apply to students registered with pre-submission status. Moreover the supervisor must have approved a well-worked first draft of the thesis as well as a detailed timeline and plan to submission.

A reduced fee is charged for pre-submission status and students will only have limited access to University facilities. They will not be entitled to:

- attendance at seminars, classes or tutorials;
- use of work-rooms, laboratories or similar facilities;
- close or regular contact with supervisors;
- University accommodation or membership of, or election to, University Committees;
- use of a study space or locker;
- social facilities of the University, other than the Careers and Employability Centre (CEC).

Students will continue to receive the same level of use of Library and Computing Service facilities up to their maximum date of registration.

18. Change of registration status

During a student's period of registration they may request a change to their registration status such as:

- full-time to part-time (or vice versa)
- request for intermission
- request to undertake fieldwork

In such situations the main supervisor should complete the relevant form and make a recommendation to the Director of Doctoral Studies.

The Director of Doctoral Studies may approve the request by signing the form and sending it to the Research Student Administration Office. The Research Student Administration Office will write to the student to confirm the change.

19. Request for an extension of registration

In exceptional circumstances a student may request an extension to their period of registration past their maximum period of registration. The maximum period of registration for the MPhil is three years for a full-time student and four years for a part-time student; for the PhD it is four years and six years respectively; the maximum period of registration for the EdD and DSW is six years. Extensions are permitted in quarterly periods (three months), up to a maximum of one year.

The request for an extension should be made to the Director of Doctoral Studies to whom the following information should be supplied:

- a statement setting out the reason for the request for an extension;
- a statement of the current progress of the research and writing-up;
- a timetable for the completion and submission of the thesis;
- any documentary evidence in support of the request;
- a statement of support from the student's main supervisor;

The Director of Doctoral Studies should complete the standard form reporting their decision to the Research Student Administration Office. The Research Student Administration Office will then send the student a formal letter informing them of the Director's decision.

Any extension granted will constitute a final period of registration. Only in exceptional circumstances will the student have a further opportunity to submit an application to the Director of Doctoral Studies.

If the Director does not agree to grant the student an extension, **the student will be required to withdraw on academic grounds**, that is, they will no longer be a candidate for a University of Sussex degree once the maximum period of registration has been reached.

20. Transfer from MPhil to PhD

A student who wishes to apply to transfer from MPhil to PhD registration should provide a written application to the main supervisor which includes:

- A copy of written work produced so far
- A statement of the way in which the thesis will be developed, including a timetable.

The main supervisor should attach a supporting statement and should then forward the application to the Head of Department or Research Convenor.

Recommended practice is that the application will then be considered at an internal viva voce examination conducted by a member or members of the department or School. The main supervisor cannot undertake that examination but, where specific expertise is required, it may be appropriate for a member of the supervisory team to participate alongside other members of the department or School. The main supervisor may also be present with the agreement of the student. The recommendation following the examination will then be passed to the Director of Doctoral Studies for approval.

If the recommendation is for the student to be upgraded to a PhD, the Research Student Administration Office must be notified of the outcome using the appropriate form. The Research Student Administration Office will write to the student to inform them of the outcome of the application.

A student who has been refused permission to change registration from MPhil to PhD and considers that the decision was based on inadequate evidence or taken in an improper manner, shall have the right to appeal against that decision by writing to the Registrar & Secretary within twenty-one days of the notification of the decision.

21 Annual leave

All doctoral students are entitled to a maximum of eight weeks annual leave including public holidays and University closure days. Students should notify their supervisors in writing of when they intend to take their annual leave. Those students holding Tier 4 visas sponsored by the University may take annual leave without risk to their immigration status. While on annual leave, students and supervisors should continue to make contact every month.

22 Maternity leave

All doctoral students are entitled to one full year (52 weeks) of maternity leave. Those students in receipt of an RCUK stipend or a Sussex Scholarship are entitled to 26 weeks of maternity leave on full stipend and a further 26 weeks of unpaid maternity leave. Students may decide when they wish their maternity leave to begin, but should inform the Research Student Administration Office of their intentions no later than two months before the start date.

23 Adoption leave

Adoption leave is granted on the same basis as maternity leave.

24 Paternity leave

Fathers are entitled to up to 10 days (two weeks) ordinary paternity leave and up to 26 weeks of additional paternity leave. For those students in receipt of an RCUK stipend or a Sussex Scholarship, the ordinary paternity leave will be at full stipend and the period of additional paternity leave may include paid and unpaid leave, depending on the individual circumstances, and any paid leave should be at full stipend. Students may decide when they wish their paternity leave to begin, but should inform the Research Student Administration Office of their intentions no later than two months before the start date.

25 Information specific to International students:

Changing to Part-time Status:

The Tier 4 immigration rules do not currently allow students who hold a Tier 4 visa to transfer to part-time status. Part time study may be permitted on some other visa types but students should discuss the implications with an International Student Advisor (based in International Student Support) before making any change to their visa status.

Intermission and authorised absence:

International doctoral students holding a Tier 4 visa are entitled to a period of authorised absence (a type of intermission) from their studies, during which the University will continue to act as their sponsor. Advice from the UKVI is that this period does not exceed two months (60 days). Periods of authorised absence of up to 60 days will be granted for maternity, paternity or adoption leave, and exceptionally for medical or financial reasons. During the period of authorised absence students must maintain regular contact with their supervisors. Students may decide when they wish their period of authorised absence to begin, but should inform the Research Student Administration Office of their intentions no later than two months before the start date. The standard intermission form should be used.

If a student holding a Tier 4 visa wishes to take intermission for longer than 60 consecutive days, the University will cease to be their sponsor. The student must then return to their home country and apply to the University for a new CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance to Study) and a new visa when they are ready to resume their studies. In applying for intermission the standard intermission form should be used.

Doctorate Extension Scheme:

The Doctorate Extension Scheme (DES) was introduced by the UK Border Agency in 2013. Through the DES scheme, the University can grant a further CAS to completing doctoral students to apply for an extension to their Tier 4 Visa. The DES visa will allow you to look for and start work in the UK (including self-employment) for a further 12 months after completion of your studies. The scheme can also provide a bridge to longer term extensions in the UK to work under either Tier 1 or 2. You must apply for this while your current Tier 4 is still valid and before you have formally completed your PhD. Contact the International Student Support Office for advice.

26 The examination process for research degrees

26.1 Appointment of examiners

Examiners are formally appointed by the Research Degrees Examination Board, and written confirmation of the appointment is sent to examiners by the Research Student Administration Office. The viva date may not be set until the appointment of the examiners has been confirmed.

If the proposed internal examiner has not previously examined a thesis at the University of Sussex, the Appointment of Examiners form must clearly indicate the name of the experienced faculty member who will be briefing the internal examiner.

Where there are particular circumstances that warrant it, an independent viva chair will be appointed by the Research Degrees Examination Board.

Once the examiners have been formally appointed and the internal examiner has advised the candidate of the viva date,

no further contact between the examiners and the candidate is permitted, as this may invalidate the examination. Instead, contact must be via the Research Student Administration Office or the candidate's supervisor.

26.2 Submission of thesis

A hard copy of the thesis will be sent to external examiners via recorded delivery and to internal examiners through the internal mail. An electronic copy of the thesis will be sent on request.

26.3 Independent report

Before the viva is held, each examiner is asked to submit an independent report on the candidate's thesis. The report should be completed using the Independent Report Form, which will be sent to examiners with the appointment letter and is also available from the Research Student Administration Office website: www.sussex.ac.uk/rsao

The independent report should explain concisely the scope of the thesis, its merits and any shortcomings to be addressed in the viva. This report should be returned to the Research Student Administration Office **within eight weeks** of receipt of the thesis.

26.4 Exchange of reports

When all the reports have been received, the Research Student Administration Office will send examiners the independent reports of their fellow examiners. Examiners should not confer on the writing of the independent reports.

26.5 Viva voce examination

The *viva voce* examination should normally be held within one month of the exchange of the independent reports between the examiners, although it may be delayed in exceptional circumstances.

It is the responsibility of the internal examiner to make the arrangements for the *viva voce* examination, and also to ensure that the Joint Report is completed and signed by both examiners and sent to the Research Student Administration Office **within two weeks** of the date of the viva.

The examiners are asked to agree in advance whether they wish the supervisor to attend the *viva voce* examination itself. The candidate may also request that the supervisor is present. The internal examiner should formally notify the candidate of the time and place of the *viva voce* examination, with a copy to the Research Student Administration Office.

Non-attendance at the *viva voce* examination

Candidates must be advised that if they refuse to agree a time, or if they do not attend the *viva voce* examination at the agreed time they risk failure of the examination, and the examiners will have the right to conduct the examination and make a recommendation to the Research Degrees Examination Board on the basis of the thesis alone.

Environment for the *viva voce* examination

Consideration should be given to the appropriateness and layout of the room in which the examination is to be held; the room should be separate and quiet and consideration should be given to the positioning of the candidate in order that they may be put at ease. More detailed guidance on the conduct of the *viva voce* examination is attached as Appendix 1.

Distant *viva voce* examinations

A 'distant *viva voce* examination' is a *viva voce* examination where **one** of the parties are not physically co-located and the examination is conducted by videoconference or Skype.

All cases of distant *viva voce* examination require review and approval by the Chair of the Research Degrees Examination Board well in advance of the proposed *viva* date. Approval will generally be granted, but may be withheld if this review indicates that the conditions of the examination would substantially disadvantage the student regardless of other difficulties that this may present. Further detail is attached at Appendix 2.

Basis of assessment

In considering whether the candidate has met the required standard for the research degree being examined, examiners should make their decision in accordance with the University of Sussex criteria for assessment of research degrees (attached as Appendix 3). Examiners should also take into account the doctoral-level qualification descriptors produced by the Quality Assurance Agency, which specify standards and characteristics that are expected of those who are awarded doctoral-level qualifications (attached as Appendix 4).

Papers-style thesis

The inclusion in a thesis of work which has been submitted for publication is permitted under the University's regulations. In examining a thesis of this kind, examiners should (i) be aware that the criteria for assigning to outcome categories are the same as for any other thesis, and include *viva* performance (i.e. the candidate should be able give a satisfactory defence of the thesis in the *viva*); (ii) be aware that successful peer review and the publication of papers do not guarantee a pass outcome in an examination for the award of PhD; (iii) pay particular attention to consistency or otherwise in the quality of those parts of the thesis which have not been submitted for publication (linking chapters). Candidates submitting a 'papers-style' thesis are required to include a declaration confirming their contribution to each paper, especially in cases where the co-author is a supervisor.

After the *viva voce* examination

Examiners may inform the candidate of the recommendation they propose to make. However, it is important that both the examiners and the candidate are aware that such a recommendation is **subject to consideration by the Research Degrees Examination Board**. In the case of a recommendation for the award of a degree, this is subject to ratification by Senate.

Examiners may indicate to the candidate the extent of any necessary revisions to the thesis being recommended. However, details of those items must also be included in the written report for consideration by the Research Degrees Examination Board and formal onward transmission to the candidate.

If the examiners have marked the hard copy thesis where typographical errors should be corrected, the copy of the thesis may be given to the candidate after the *viva voce* examination.

Thereafter, any guidance from the examiners to the candidate should be communicated via the supervisor. The examiners must not have any direct communication with the candidate about the revision during the permitted revision period; specifically, they must not advise the candidate whether the extent of the revision is likely to be satisfactory or not, or whether the candidate's work is ready for re-examination.

26.6 Joint Report Form

A copy of the Joint Report Form will be sent to the internal examiner prior to the *viva voce* examination and the examiners should complete the report jointly and return the form **within two weeks** of the *viva* to the Research Student Administration Office. It is important that this report is as full as possible in order that the Research Degrees Examination Board can assess whether the basis for the examiners' recommendation is sound.

Section A

Report on the performance of the candidate in the *viva voce* examination. Special attention should be given to the extent to which any doubts raised in the Independent Reports have been dealt with.

Section B

Indicate the recommendation from the list of permitted recommendations.

Section C

In exceptional cases, indicate which of the reports may **not** be issued to the supervisor(s) and/or to the candidate. A confidential commentary may instead be added, which will be given solely to the supervisor(s) to assist them in giving guidance to the candidate.

Section D

Detail any corrections that are required, even if a list of corrections has been given directly to the candidate or marked in the hard copy of the thesis.

If the recommendation is that the candidate may revise the thesis and resubmit for the award of either MPhil or PhD, it is important that the examiners provide separate instructions on the revisions required for each award. This section of the report should be as full as possible in order to assist the candidate in their revision of the thesis.

Note that if the candidate is given the opportunity of resubmission for either the MPhil or the PhD, **the same examiners** will be asked to consider the revised thesis and to submit further independent and joint reports in due course. On reading the revised thesis the examiners will be in a position to decide whether a second *viva* examination is required.

26.7 Review of recommendation by Research Degrees Examination Board

The examiners' recommendation will be considered by the Research Degrees Examination Board as soon as possible, and normally within two weeks of receipt of the Joint Report. If there is a disparity between the recommendation made by the examiners and the content of the examiners' reports, the Chair of the Research Degrees Examination Board may seek clarification from the examiners on the basis of their recommendation.

If the recommendation is for the award of a degree, it will be passed to the Chair of Doctoral School Board for approval on behalf of the Senate.

On completion of an examination, the examiners' reports will be released, under confidential cover, to the Director of Doctoral Studies in the relevant School.

26.8 Outcome of examination

The Research Student Administration Office will inform the candidate in writing of the decision of the Research Degrees Examination Board and will communicate any advice and instructions in cases of referral for corrections or re-examination. The examiners may not contact the candidate until the examination process is concluded.

The role of the Research Degrees Examination Board

The role of the Research Degrees Examination Board is to formally appoint examiners on behalf of Senate and to consider the recommendations made by those examiners on the outcome of the doctoral examination. The Research Degrees Examination Board will then make a recommendation to Senate on the award of the degree, and the Research Student Administration Office will communicate the result to the student.

Most of the work of the Research Degrees Examination Board is carried out by the Chair and the Vice-Chair, who are each appointed by Doctoral Studies Committee for a 3-year term, and who between them must have experience of graduate work at research degree level in both the humanities and social sciences and in science or engineering. The Chair has discretion to call a meeting of the full Research Degrees Examination Board to consider any cases where the recommendation of the examiners, following the *viva*, does not appear to be straightforward.

The Research Degrees Examination Board becomes involved with a research student's progress at various points during the examination process:

- at the time of the appointment of examiners (at least two months before the thesis is submitted);
- when they have received the individual and joint reports of the internal and external examiners for consideration of the recommended outcome (several weeks after the viva);
- when they recommend the award of the degree to Senate (after all corrections requested by the examiners have been made to the thesis and approved by the examiners).

Distant vivas

The viva should normally be held at the University of Sussex with all parties present in one room. However this arrangement may not always be possible, and in order not to unfairly disadvantage the candidate in such cases the following guidelines must be followed.

A 'distant viva-voce examination' is a viva-voce examination where **one** of the parties cannot be present at the University of Sussex.

All cases of distant viva voce examination require review and approval by the Research Degrees Examination Board, which delegates this authority to the Chair or Vice Chair to act on their behalf.

Approval will generally be granted, but may be withheld if the review indicates that the conditions of the examination would substantially disadvantage the student, regardless of other difficulties that withholding of approval may present.

A request for review of distant examination arrangements needs to be received a minimum of two weeks before the examination. It is preferred that the request is received as early as possible.

The request needs to:

1. Identify the party that will not be present at the University and the reason for the request
2. Specify the technical arrangements for participation (see below)
3. Assure the RDEB that a brief report concerning the efficacy and quality of the arrangements will be provided following the viva voce examination.

The Research Degrees Examination board will generally request the appointment of an independent Chair for distant viva voce examinations. The Chair should be nominated and briefed by the Director of Doctoral Studies.

Technical Guidelines

1. We expect examinations to be conducted using the best technology which can be practically accessed at the local and remote sites.
2. The central considerations in assessing the conditions of the examination from a technical viewpoint are whether a continuous video image will be available at both local and remote sites and whether parties at the local site can both see and interact with the distant party.

3. The Research Student Administration Office can provide guidance on suitable locations on campus for holding a distant viva.

Variance to these procedures may be approved in exceptional circumstances.

27 Academic Appeals

The Academic Appeals Procedure is intended to provide a formal means for reviewing a decision made on student progression, assessment and awards, and resolving the student's concerns in a fair and consistent manner. This is different from the Student Complaints Procedure, which provides a means for resolving specific problems or areas of concern a student may have, at the time these arise during the academic year, relating either to teaching/supervisory provision or university services more generally. In making an appeal, privacy and confidentiality will be respected, and disclosure of information provided by a student in the course of an appeal will be restricted to those individual officers directly involved in consideration of the appeal. The appeal will be considered in accordance with the University's Equality and Diversity Policy.

Appeals can be made against the outcome of a research degree/professional doctorate exam or against a decision of the School that a student be required to withdraw on the basis of unsatisfactory progress. Please note however that a matter of academic judgment, either by the examiners of a thesis or by those conducting a School-level progress review, is not subject to appeal. For details, please see the *Regulations for the Award of the Degrees of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy* or the *Regulations for the Award of Professional Doctorates and exit awards* in the latest annual edition of the [University Regulations](#).

Appeals must be submitted, with supporting evidence, within twenty-one calendar days of the decision being notified to the student. A decision in relation to a research degree exam is not subject to appeal until this has been ratified by a meeting of the Research Degrees Examination Board. A decision of a School progress review that the student has not met the required standard to continue on the PhD, and is required instead to re-register on the MPhil, is not subject to appeal as this is a matter of academic judgment. Nor is a decision of the examiners that a student be required to re-register as a full or part-time student (rather than with pre-submission status) subject to appeal as this is also a matter of academic judgment. For more information please see the Academic Appeals webpage:

www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/complaintsappeals/academic

28 Complaints

Wherever possible complaints should be raised immediately with the member of staff responsible, or with one of the support services below, with the aim of resolving the problem directly and informally:

- a. One of the Student Life Advisors (for contacts, refer to the Student Life Centre website)
- b. The Students' Union's Advice and Representation Centre
- c. A Student Representative (refer to USSU Student Reps)
- d. A Disability Advisor (such as the ITS Disability Advisor, should the student have any issues using the University's Computing Service)

Supervisors should contact the Research Student Administration Office if a complaint has been raised with them, either formally or informally. For additional information and guidance on the various stages of the complaints procedure, see the Student Complaints Procedure webpage:

www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/complaintsappeals/students

1 Committee Terms of Reference

1.1 Doctoral School Board

Key role: To promote and develop a strong research training culture and ethos across the University for doctoral students, encouraging activity that is consistent with an internationally outstanding institution and a profile that matches the best universities at home and abroad.

1 Terms of Reference

- a. to develop, communicate and regularly review the implementation of the University's strategic plan in relation to Doctoral Students;
- b. to identify and draw to the attention of the appropriate University body the resources necessary to implement the strategic plan in relation to Doctoral Students.
- c. to monitor the national and international environment in order to respond appropriately;
- d. to oversee the dispersal of funds for doctoral studentships as may be allocated by Council and by funders;
- e. to approve School doctoral recruitment strategies, to receive regular reports from Schools about progress against strategy;
- f. to receive reports from Doctoral Studies Committee, to provide advice to Doctoral Studies Committee on University policies and strategy;
- g. to receive reports from Doctoral Training Centre/Partnership governing boards;
- h. to monitor the performance of major doctoral training grants held by the University;
- i. to advise the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group on the formulation and implementation of the University's strategy for doctoral student recruitment;
- j. to advise the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group on the setting of doctoral recruitment targets, and the monitoring of performance against those targets;
- k. to advise the Vice-Chancellor's Executive Group on policy matters relating to the setting of doctoral tuition fees.

2 Composition:

Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research (Chair), Directors of Doctoral Training Centres, Director of Doctoral Education, Postgraduate Association Chair (where the role holder is a postgraduate research student; where not, then the representative from the Doctoral Studies Committee sitting on Senate shall be the representative to the Board).

In attendance: Director of Research and Enterprise, Academic Registrar, and Assistant Director of the Doctoral School (Secretary).

3 Reports to: Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.

1.2 Doctoral Studies Committee

Key Role: The Doctoral Studies Committee shall oversee the delivery of provision for postgraduate research students, including their educational and career development, within the context of delivery of the University's Research Strategy.

1 Terms of Reference:

- a. to make recommendations to Teaching and Learning Committee on general procedures governing programmes of supervised study and research leading to research degrees and professional doctorates;
- b. to approve and keep under review a code of practice for research degree and professional doctorate courses;
- c. to define monitor and review policies and procedures relating to supervision and assessment of research degree students, including: (i) comparability of research student experience across the University; (ii) approval and appointment of research supervisors; (iii) provision, monitoring and comparability of research supervisor training; (iv) development and implementation of processes for the assessment of research students;
- d. to consider, and determine action on: (i) research student annual monitoring procedures and reports; (ii) the annual reports of the Research Degree Examination Board, the Professional Doctorate Examination Board; (iii) the Research Degree and Professional Doctorate Appeals Board; (iv) investigations conducted under the Procedures for Dealing with Allegations or Complaints of Academic Misconduct by Students engaged in Research;
- e. to ratify the recommendations of the Research Degree Examination Board, the Professional Doctorate Examination Board and the Joint Research Degrees Approval Board on the award of degrees and other distinctions;
- f. to consider annual statistical reports on matters relating to admission, retention and award outcomes of research degree and professional doctorate students;
- g. to consider and implement the training and development provision for postgraduate research students, and to ensure there are adequate mechanisms for the inclusion of research students in the research life of the University.

2 Composition:

Director of Doctoral Education (Chair); Directors of Doctoral Studies of the Schools; Directors of Doctoral Training Centres, One representative from IDS; Three postgraduate research School Student Representatives (one of each from Arts, Science - including BSMS - and Social Sciences); Chair and Vice-Chair of the Research Degree Examination Board.

In attendance: Assistant Director of the Doctoral School; Head of Postgraduate Research Administration (Secretary).

3 Reports to: Doctoral School Board.

1.3 Research Degrees Examination Board

1 Terms of Reference:

- h. to appoint examiners, on behalf of Senate. The appointments normally to be approved on behalf of the Board by the Chair or Vice-Chair;
- i. to consider examiners' reports and to forward recommendations on candidates to the Doctoral Studies Committee in accordance with the University Regulations for Research Degrees;
- j. to report annually to the Doctoral Studies Committee;
- k. to formulate instructions and communications to candidates about the results of any examination for a research degree. The Board will hold full meetings only to consider those cases where a candidate has failed under Regulations 58(c), 59(c), 59(d), 59(f), 62 (b), 64(b), and 64(c). Notwithstanding this, the Chair has discretion to call a meeting to consider any cases where the recommendation does not appear to be straightforward. In all other cases the examiners' recommendations are forwarded by the Chair, on behalf of the Board, in consultation with the Vice-Chair, where appropriate. In the absence of the Chair, authority shall be delegated to the Vice-Chair and vice-versa. In cases where the Board is required to meet there will be a quorum of at least three members of the Board in addition to the Chair, one of whom must be the Vice-Chair if the case to be considered does not fall within the general academic area of the Chair.

2 Composition:

- a. Two senior members of the academic faculty as Chair and Vice-Chair, one with experience of graduate work at research degree level in the humanities and social sciences and one with experience in science or engineering, nominated by the Doctoral Studies Committee and appointed by Teaching and Learning Committee.
- b. Up to six senior members of the academic faculty, with experience of graduate work at research level, nominated by the Doctoral Studies Committee after consultation with the appropriate Directors of Doctoral Studies in order to ensure coverage and balance of expertise, and appointed by Teaching and Learning Committee.

3 Reports to:

Doctoral Studies Committee.

1.4 Professional Doctorate Examination Board

1 Terms of Reference:

For the taught component of the course

- a. to set, conduct and mark the examinations for Professional Doctorates;
- b. to approve, on behalf of the Senate, the results of the examination of course-work of candidates and the progress of candidates to proceed to the research component of the course;

- c. to report to Doctoral Studies Committee on the conduct of that year's examinations and on the plans for the following year's examinations;
- d. to establish sub-groups to make recommendations to the Board on late submissions, and to decide on extensions to submission deadlines and on special arrangements for candidates;
- e. to consider and forward recommendations on candidates who successfully complete Phase 1, or Phases 1 and 2 (the taught component), to the Chair of the Doctoral Studies Committee in accordance with the University Regulations for Professional Doctorates.

For the research component of the course

- a. to appoint examiners (the appointments normally to be approved on behalf of the Board by the Chairperson or the Vice-Chair);
- b. to consider examiners' reports and to forward recommendations on candidates to the Chair of the Doctoral Studies Committee in accordance with the University Regulations for Professional Doctorates;
- c. to report annually to the Doctoral Studies Committee;
- d. to formulate instructions and communications to candidates about the results of any examination for Professional Doctorates. The Board will hold full meetings only to consider those cases where a candidate has failed under Regulations 56(b), 56(c), 57(c), 57(d), 57(e), 57(f), 60(b), 60(c) and 61(b) for the award of a Professional Doctorate. Notwithstanding this, the Chair has discretion to call a meeting to consider any cases where the recommendation does not appear to be straightforward. In all other cases the examiners' recommendations are forwarded by the Chair, on behalf of the Board, in consultation with the Vice-Chair, where appropriate.

2 Composition:

Two senior members of the academic faculty as Chair and Vice-Chair, nominated by the Doctoral Studies Committee and appointed by Teaching and Learning Committee. Normally the two members appointed under this category will be the Chair or the Vice-Chair of the Research Degree Examination Board and also a relevant Director of Doctoral Studies; The Director(s) of Doctoral Studies of the relevant School(s); The Course Convenor(s); The internal examiners nominated by the Director of Doctoral Studies for appointment by the School Teaching and Learning Committee; The external examiner(s) appointed by Teaching and Learning Committee for each course.

3 Reports to: Doctoral Studies Committee.

1.5 Joint Research Degrees Approval Board

1 Terms of Reference:

The Joint Research Degrees Approval Board operates on behalf of the Doctoral Studies Committee of the University of Sussex and the Doctoral College Board of the University of Brighton:

- with delegated authority to admit candidates to research degree courses in BSMS awarded jointly by the University of Brighton and the University of Sussex (note: authority to admit candidates lies with the JRDAB on behalf of the two Universities and it approves the precise admissions process to be followed);
- to establish and maintain a register of research degree supervisors for BSMS candidates;
- to approve the appointment of external examiners for research degrees within BSMS on behalf of the Senate of the University of Sussex and the Academic Board of the University of Brighton;
- to agree the examination arrangements and the examining team in accordance with the regulations for research degree courses in BSMS awarded jointly by the University of Brighton and the University of Sussex and overseen by the Joint Approval and Review Board;
- to monitor the progress of students including approval of the thesis outline, the supervisory team, the transfer to PhD or MD and requests for suspension, extension and withdrawal;
- to recommend to the relevant authorities of the two universities the conferment of the award in respect of all individual candidates by deciding upon the examiners' recommendations;
- to provide feedback and comments to the Joint Approval and Review Board on the operation of the regulations and code of practice for research degree courses in BSMS awarded jointly by the University of Brighton and the University of Sussex;
- to report annually to the Joint Approval and Review Board for onward transmission (for information, not action) as appropriate to the Doctoral Studies Committee of the University of Sussex and the Doctoral College Board of the University of Brighton.

2 Composition:

Chair or Deputy Chair of the Doctoral College Board of the University of Brighton and the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Research Degree Examination Board of the University of Sussex, one of whom shall be appointed Chair by the Joint Approval and Review Board (with the Chair rotating between the two universities on an annual basis); BSMS Director of Research; BSMS Director of Doctoral Studies; Two other members of BSMS staff involved with research degrees supervision; Doctoral College Manager of the University of Brighton; Secretary to the Research Degree Examination Board of the University of Sussex.

In attendance:

Secretary to Doctoral College Board of the University of Brighton (Secretary); Assistant Director of the Doctoral School of the University of Sussex; One member of BSMS staff involved in the administration of research degrees.

3 Reports to:

Doctoral Studies Committee of the University of Sussex and the Doctoral College Board of the University of Brighton.

1.6 Research Degree and Professional Doctorate Appeals Board

1 Terms of Reference:

On behalf of Senate, to consider appeals against decisions of the Research Degree Examination Board and the Professional Doctorate Examination Board.

2 Composition:

Vice-Chancellor; Two of the other Pro-Vice-Chancellors (excluding the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research)); Two other members of the academic faculty appointed by and from Senate. Any three members should constitute a quorum and no member of the Research Degree and Professional Doctorate Appeals Board should be a member of the Research Degree Examination Board or of the Professional Doctorate Examination Board.

3 Reports to:

Senate.

2 Guidance for examiners on the conduct of viva-voce examinations

Before the viva, the examiners should hold a pre-meeting to discuss the following:

- Will one of you serve as chair and what will this entail?
- Who will introduce the participants, and explain the structure of the viva to the candidate?
- Who will introduce the purposes of the viva to the candidate and what will they say?
- What is the (agreed?) provisional decision – good thesis, borderline thesis, failed thesis?
- How long should this viva last? If the viva is likely to exceed two hours, you may want to include a break
- Provisionally, and recognising that the unfolding direction of the discussion may itself suggest appropriate lines of questioning, what specific questions do you want to ask?
- It is generally helpful to provide some positive feedback at the beginning of the examination to dispel the potential for candidate anxiety and to allow them to make their best performance.
- If the discussion moves away from the examination purpose to broader review of the candidate's work, e.g. to publication options, then this should clearly be signalled in advance and the candidate should be informed that the discussion does not form part of the assessment

- Checklist of preparations for the examination room
- Sufficient comfortable seating and table space
- Clock/watch
- Fresh water and glasses
- Adequate ventilation/heating
- Your notes and other examination paperwork
- Paper and pen/pencil
- 'Do not disturb' sign on the door
- Telephone unplugged
- Mobile phones switched off

Guidelines for distant viva voce examinations

The viva should normally be held at the University of Sussex with all parties present in one room. However this arrangement may not always be possible, and in order not to unfairly disadvantage the candidate in such cases the following guidelines must be followed.

A 'distant viva voce examination' is a viva voce examination where one of the parties cannot be present at the University of Sussex.

All cases of distant viva voce examination require review and approval by the Research Degrees Examination Board, which delegates this authority to the Chair or Vice Chair to act on their behalf. Approval will generally be granted, but may be withheld if the review indicates that the conditions of the examination would substantially disadvantage the student, regardless of other difficulties that withholding of approval may present.

A request for review of distant examination arrangements needs to be received a minimum of two weeks before the examination. It is preferred that the request is received as early as possible.

The request needs to:

- Explain the rationale for the request
- Identify the party that will not be present at the University
- Specify the technical arrangements for participation (see below)
- Assure the RDEB that a brief report concerning the efficacy and quality of the arrangements will be provided following the viva voce examination
- The Research Degrees Examination board will generally request the appointment of an independent Chair for distant viva voce examinations. The Chair should be nominated and briefed by the Director of Doctoral Studies.

Technical Guidelines

- We expect examinations to be conducted using the best technology which can be practically accessed at the local and remote sites.

- The central considerations in assessing the conditions of the examination from a technical viewpoint are whether a continuous video image will be available at both local and remote sites and whether parties at the local site can both see and interact with the distant party.
- The Research Student Administration Office can provide guidance on suitable locations on campus for holding a distant viva.

Variance to these procedures may be approved in exceptional circumstances.

3 Criteria for the award of the research degrees of Master of Philosophy, Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Education/Social Work

The University's Regulations for Higher Degrees state that a candidate shall be required to satisfy the examiners in one of the following:

a. Master of Philosophy

- for the award of the Master of Philosophy, that the thesis makes an adequate original contribution to knowledge or understanding or is a valuable presentation or interpretation of material put together in an original manner.
- for the award of the Master of Philosophy taken by musical composition, that the portfolio of musical compositions makes an adequate original contribution to the field of composition and that the associated discursive and critical component should comprise (a) a critical understanding of the attendant creative process (b) a critical consideration of the relationship between the compositions and relevant practices in the field within which they are located (c) an account of ways in which the practice responds to or explores specific issues in relevant critical theory.
- for the award of the Master of Philosophy taken by music-theatre performance, that the work makes an adequate original contribution to the field of music theatre practice and that the associated discursive and critical component should comprise (a) a critical understanding of the attendant creative process (b) a critical consideration of the relationship between the performance work and relevant practices in the field (c) an account of ways in which the practice responds to or explores specific issues in relevant critical theory.
- for the award of the Master of Philosophy taken by Media Practice that the work makes an adequate original contribution to the field of media practice, and that the associated discursive and critical component should comprise (a) a critical understanding of the attendant creative process (b) a critical consideration of the relationship between the practical work and relevant practices in the field (c) an account of ways in which the practice responds to or explores specific issues in relevant critical theory.

- for the award of the Master of Philosophy taken by creative writing, that the work demonstrates adequate levels of creativity, originality, scholarly competence and knowledge of the field within which it is located. The critical component should comprise at least one of (a) a critical understanding of the attendant creative process (b) a critical consideration of the relationship between the literary composition and contemporary or traditional achievements in the genre (c) an exploration of ways in which the writing responds to or explores specific issues in contemporary literary and critical theory (d) a research-based consideration of the creative writing process in relation to issues in the field of personal development. If the creative and critical components are inter-woven, examiners will take particular account of the way these components enhance each other and form a coherent whole. **All students registered from 2008/9 will be examined under this regulation; students registered prior to 2008/9 will also be examined under this regulation, except those who have chosen poetry for their creative component, who will be examined under the corresponding regulation for creative writing as stated in the 2007/8 version of the Ordinances and Regulations.**

b. Doctor of Philosophy

- for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy, that the thesis makes a substantial original contribution to knowledge or understanding.
- for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy taken by musical composition, that the portfolio of musical compositions makes a substantial original contribution to the field of composition and that the associated discursive and critical component should comprise (a) a critical understanding of the attendant creative process (b) a critical consideration of the relationship between the compositions and relevant practices in the field within which they are located (c) an account of ways in which the practice responds to or explores specific issues in relevant critical theory.
- for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy taken by music-theatre performance, that the work makes a substantial original contribution to the field of music theatre practice, and that the associated discursive and critical component should comprise (a) a critical understanding of the attendant creative process (b) a critical consideration of the relationship between the performance work and relevant practices in the field (c) an account of ways in which the practice responds to or explores specific issues in relevant critical theory.
- for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy taken by Media Practice, that the work makes a substantial original contribution to the field of media practice, and that the associated discursive and critical component should comprise (a) a critical understanding of the attendant creative process (b) a critical consideration of the relationship between the practical work and relevant

practices in the field (c) an account of ways in which the practice responds to or explores specific issues in relevant critical theory.

- for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy taken by Published Works, that the published work makes a significant contribution to knowledge in a particular field. The published work must also provide evidence of the capacity of the candidate to pursue further research. It should represent a coherent contribution to research in a given field and demonstrate a depth of scholarship and originality comparable with that required in a PhD thesis. The material submitted shall be sufficiently extensive as to provide convincing evidence that the research constitutes a substantial contribution to knowledge or scholarship. The submission should normally include a substantial proportion of peer-reviewed work. Published Work' refers to: refereed articles, chapters, monographs, books, scholarly editions of a text, edited collections of essays or other materials, software and creative work (including fine art, audio/visual works, design, music or performance) or other original artefacts. The precise selection of work undertaken by the candidate will depend on the discipline concerned. 'Work' shall be regarded as 'published' only if it, or a record of it, is publicly available and traceable through papers, books, catalogues, abstracts, citations indices or equivalent sources of information.
- for the award of the Doctor of Philosophy taken by creative writing that the work demonstrates substantial levels of creativity, originality, scholarly competence and knowledge of the field within which it is located. The critical component should comprise at least one of (a) a critical understanding of the attendant creative process (b) a critical consideration of the relationship between the literary composition and contemporary or traditional achievements in the genre (c) an exploration of ways in which the writing responds to or explores specific issues in contemporary literary and critical theory (d) a research-based consideration of the creative writing process in relation to issues in the field of personal development. If the creative and critical components are inter-woven, examiners will take particular account of the way these components enhance each other and form a coherent whole. **All students registered from 2008/9 will be examined under this regulation; students registered prior to 2008/9 will also be examined under this regulation, except those who have chosen poetry for their creative component, who will be examined under the corresponding regulation for creative writing as stated in the 2007/8 version of the Ordinances and Regulations.**

c. Doctor of Education or Doctor of Social Work

- for the award of the Doctor of Education or Doctor of Social Work, that the thesis makes a substantial original contribution to knowledge or understanding.

4 Quality assurance agency descriptors for the award of qualifications at doctoral level

Doctorates are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

1. the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;
2. a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
3. the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
4. a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- a. make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- b. continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches;

and will have:

- c. the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

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