School of Engineering & Informatics

Handbook for Research Students
Academic year 2015/16

US
University of Sussex

Welcome!

From the Director of Doctoral Studies
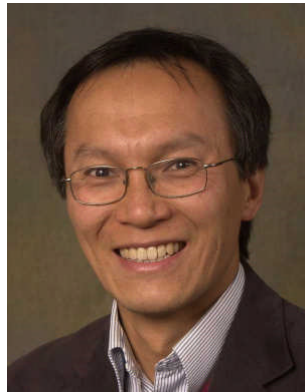
Professor Peter Cheng

Welcome to the School of Engineering & Informatics

I am delighted you have chosen to study at Sussex and I am sure you will benefit from the time you spend working towards a higher research degree. Our aim is to equip you with the subject knowledge, research expertise and transferable skills that you will need to advance your abilities and future prospects. We hope you will also embrace the rich opportunities available at the University and in the community beyond, have a stimulating and enjoyable time, and make new friends and colleagues.

The School of Engineering & Informatics is at the leading edge of teaching and research. We have strong national and international links and we are well funded by grants from government research councils, the European Union, and charitable foundations. In the School you will benefit from well-equipped laboratories with specialist technical staff to support your study and research; and in the wider University you will find excellent academic and professional services.

Research is by its very nature challenging and postgraduate research even more so: not only are you trying to discover or create new things but you are simultaneously learning how to do research. You will need a high level of self-motivation and determination in order to make a significant contribution of your own. A research degree is very much what you will make of it, but your supervisor is there to guide you towards your research objectives and help you develop your abilities.

If you have problems at Sussex (whether academic, personal, or financial) you'll find that help and advice is never far away. Please check through this Handbook - it will serve as a first source of information if you need help. Your main contact should always be your supervisor, but many others can offer advice and assistance – they are listed in the following pages.

I hope you enjoy your studies here and I look forward to talking with you about your research. Good luck with your work.

Peter Cheng

Contents

Essential Information

Where to get Help.

- **This Handbook**. To save time, please check this Handbook first. It covers the commonest issues affecting research students.
- **Your Sussex Direct account**. Your registration details, supervisors, timetable of study (if you are taking any taught courses) and other details held about you by the University can be seen by logging in.
- **Official documentation**. *University of Sussex Handbook and Regulations for Doctoral Researchers.* The most up to date University Handbook for Doctoral Researchers can be found here: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/rsao/regulations
- **Your main supervisor**. Consult your supervisor on all academic matters. The formal obligations and responsibilities of your supervisor are explained in the *University Handbook.*
- **Your second supervisor**. All students are allocated an additional supervisor. Some second supervisors have a minimal day-to-day role in student supervision, but all have a responsibility to keep a watch on your progress. You can find the name of your second supervisor by checking into your Sussex Direct account.
- **Administrative problems**. For issues concerning your funding, registration, fees, intermission etc., contact the Research & Enterprise Coordinator (see page 4).
- **Student Advisors**. For complex problems around family, finances, health, disability, or other issues affecting your general welfare you should make an appointment to see a Student Advisor in the Student Life Centre. http://www.sussex.ac.uk/studentlifecentre
- **General enquiries** – ask at the School Office in Chichester I Room 012.

Keep in touch!

- **Your contact details**. It's important you keep your contact details up to date. You can update them using your Sussex Direct account.
- **Email.** The School makes extensive use of email – please check your email regularly.
- **Your pigeonhole.** Pigeonholes for Informatics Students are in Chichester I opposite the debugging room (which is CI202). Engineering Student's pigeonholes are in Richmond Building at the back of the ground floor.
- **Staff contact details.** Contact details of all staff are here: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/profiles/search/.
- **The School website and Department WebPages** http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ei/http://www.sussex.ac.uk/engineering/ http://www.sussex.ac.uk/informatics http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ei/internal/

Staff Responsibilities & Contact details

Contact details of staff can be found at http://www.sussex.ac.uk/profiles/search/

Full staff, technician, and student lists can be found here:
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/engineering/people/peoplelists
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/informatics/people/peoplelists

Internal phone numbers are the same as the <u>final four digits</u> of the external number.

Head of School
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Research & Enterprise Coordinator
Mr Luke Scott
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T: +44 1273 678367

Your Thesis and University Registration

Why you must plan your Project.

For most research students, the project is likely to take from 3 to 3.5 years to complete (full time). This may seem a long time, but research can be difficult and unpredictable. Failure to finish in time may result in financial hardship for you because we have no funds to support students beyond the duration of their awards, and registered students are not eligible for job seeker's benefits. It is therefore imperative that you plan and organise well in collaboration with your supervisor, and work very hard in the first two years. Your Annual Review in May each year will help you keep 'on track' in planning and executing your project.

Your thesis and registration

As your thesis approaches completion, you will be able to estimate your submission date. You should then apply for the research examination. Contact the Research Student Administration Office (RSAO) to ask for an 'intent to submit' form and details of how your thesis should be prepared and presented, and how your viva examination will be conducted.

If your research is complete and your thesis will be submitted before the end of your third year, then no registration beyond the third year will be necessary.

If your research is not completed by the end of your third year and you need more time to work on your project, you will have to register again as a research student for your fourth year. If your funding has ended you will have to pay the academic fees from your own resources.

If your research work is completed or very nearly so by the end of the third year but you need more time to prepare your thesis, then registration as a 'pre-submission status' student may be allowed. Pre-submission status is intended for students who are writing up, and your access to university facilities is accordingly limited to the Library, IT services, and the Careers service. You will not have access to office or laboratory space, and only limited access to supervision. Pre-submission status fees are currently £250 for one academic year and are normally payable by the student.

Finally, unless there are *exceptional* circumstances, the University does not accept thesis submissions later than the end of the fourth year, so you must plan your writing-up accordingly.

Academic Misconduct

You should be aware that plagiarism, fraud, collusion, personation, interference and non-compliance are all academic offences. When you first arrive at the School, and again when you submit your thesis, you will be asked to sign a statement that you understand the nature of these offences and that your research will be entirely your own work.

Collusion is the preparation or production of work for assessment jointly with another person or persons unless explicitly permitted by the examiners.

Plagiarism is the use, without acknowledgement, of the intellectual work of other people, and the act of representing the ideas or discoveries of another as one's own in written work submitted for assessment.

Personation is where someone other than the student prepares the work submitted for assessment.

Misconduct in unseen examinations includes having access, or attempting to gain access, during an examination, to any books, memoranda, notes, unauthorised calculators, or any other material, except such as may have been supplied by the invigilator or authorised by official university bodies.

Fraud is a deliberate deception, usually involving the invention of data or the fabrication of results or observations in practical or project work

Interference is the intentional damage to, or removal of, the research-related property of another.

Non-compliance is the intentional failure to accord with the requirements governing research – whether the terms and conditions of awards, the accounting and ethical policies, or health and safety regulations. Plagiarism is the use of the academic work of another person, without acknowledgement, presenting it as if one's own. Fraud is the deliberate fabrication of results or observations. Collusion is the preparation of work for assessment with the assistance of another person where this has not been permitted by the examiners.

Attendance & Absences

Attendance and Supervision Meetings

You should be attending for about 40 hours per week if full-time and a pro-rata number of hours if part-time. If you are an Independent Distance Learning student, you are expected to be working full-time on your research.

It is possible to switch from full time to part-time registration (or vice versa) from the start of a term providing your supervisor and the Director of Doctoral Studies agrees, and your funding body permits it. You should apply for this at least one month before the start of the new term.

Overseas students cannot study part-time on a "Tier 4" student visa.

You should meet with your supervisor regularly. Most students have weekly scheduled individual meetings with their supervisor. For many contact also occurs day-to-day in the lab. It is the policy of the School that a supervision log is written on Sussex Direct at least once every four weeks for full time students (or 6 weeks for part-time students). It is normal practice for students to write the log entry and supervisors to provide comments. You and your supervisor both have responsibility to keep the log up to date, so discuss with your supervisor how you will do this in your first/next supervision meeting.

In Sussex Direct go to your Study Pages -> Timetable -> Event Bookings.

Absences

Short periods of absence for holidays must be agreed with your main supervisor, as must attendance at conferences or visits to other universities or laboratories.

If you need a longer period of absence to attend to family problems, or for financial or health reasons, you should apply for Intermission (also known as Temporary Withdrawal). An application form can be found online:

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/rsao/forms

Intermission is granted for individual months. There are no fees payable during Intermission and you should not be using university facilities or your School office or laboratory while on intermission.

Intermission may require that your funding body be informed.

If you are an overseas student, you should contact the International Office if you are seeking Intermission. There may be restrictions on your visa.

Laboratory & Office Safety

In an Emergency

In an emergency dial **Ext 3333** from an internal phone or **01273 873333** from a mobile.

It is important that this number is used and **NOT 999** as the Security Team will meet emergency services at the entrance to the campus and guide them directly to the relevant location. Otherwise, emergency vehicles can get lost on campus and this may delay their response.

Blue emergency telephones are also provided at various locations on campus. They are directly linked to the University's 24 hour Security Service.

Security

There is a 24-hour Security Service on campus. They can be contacted on **Ext 8234** from an internal phone, or **01273 678234** from an external line, or by email on security@sussex.ac.uk

Health and Safety Office (HSO)

The University HSO can be contacted via the webpage at http://www.sussex.ac.uk/hso

New Research Students

Supervisors are responsible for the health and safety of the students and projects they supervise. Ask your supervisor about the risks in your working environment and the procedures that have been put in place to ensure you can work safely.

It is important you should download a copy of the Science Schools Safety Handbook and read the precautionary measures that must be used, particularly in laboratories. These include safe use of apparatus, chemicals, lasers and radiation, radioactive materials, machinery and gases including compressed air.

For further information please visit the School Health and Safety webpages where you can also find the Health and Safety Handbook.

Your Annual Review and Interview

The Annual Review is an important event for Research Students.

The review determines whether you are making good progress and whether you will be allowed to continue your studies. It is also a valuable opportunity for you to receive independent feedback on your work, and for you to comment on the supervision, services, and facilities available to you. You can also discuss your career options and any additional training you may need.

Your interview is conducted without your supervisor present, by another member of the academic faculty. In some cases, the interviewer may be your second supervisor.

For your first Annual Review, you will have two interviewers.

The purpose of your Annual Review and interview is fivefold:

- It allows you to reflect on your work and receive constructive feedback on your progress.
- You have the opportunity to comment on facilities in your School, working arrangements with your supervisors, and any other issue of concern to you.
- You can discuss career options and any additional training you need.
- The review decides whether or not you will be re-registered for the next academic year.
- For some funded students, successful completion of the Annual Review is a requirement for continuation of funding. Please check your offer letter.

Starting and Finishing the Review

In your first year the timing of your first Review will depend on when you started. September and January starters will be reviewed in the Summer Term with May starters completing an Interim Appraisal followed by a full review later in the year. Please check the review timetable for a clearer picture.

By your third year you will be following the 'normal' pattern of undertaking the annual review every July.You will receive an email in late March asking you to start the Review and complete it by early July. Full details of how to proceed, including the forms needed, will be on the Annual Review webpages at:

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ei/internal/forstudents/pgres/annualreview

It is important to complete the Review on time. If you delay and miss the submission deadline in July, the University may impose a £50 late registration charge. Funded students will find their maintenance payments are affected.

Interim appraisal

The interim appraisal is for all 1st year postgraduate research students, with the purpose of providing an early realistic appraisal on the student's progress to date. The interim appraisal will take place depending on when you started your study and can be checked on the timetable. The appraisal is purely advisory and will not directly affect your registration status.

Research Methods and Skills Module

The School runs a PGR training module specially designed for Engineering and Informatics students. Its purpose is not only to develop your research skills, but also to directly support your timely submission and successful completion. The design of course focuses upon topics that will aim to improve your effectiveness in research and will involve tasks of immediate relevance to your research, the annual review, thesis and paper writing, and viva defence.

The module is compulsory and you must attend sufficient sessions and pass the module assignments in order to be allowed to progress to the next year.

The course convenor will contact all new starters directly with further details on course content and schedule.

Research Seminar Programmes

School of Engineering and Informatics

The School runs a weekly seminar series called the Work In Progress Seminars (WIPS).

All PhD students are expected to attend - two important aspects of your research training are
(i) developing an awareness of research in related science and technology fields, and
(ii) learning the practical skill of presenting your research, which can be developed through observing how other people present.

All Seminars are announced online:
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ei/internal/research/wips

Department of Engineering & Design

Ask your supervisor for further information on research seminars, or look at your research group's individual web pages:

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/engineering/research

Department of Informatics

Ask your supervisor for further information on research seminars, or look at your research group's individual web pages:

http://www.sussex.ac.uk/ei/internal/research/seminars/infoseminars

Going to Conferences, Summer Schools & Travel

As a Research student it is a good idea to try to attend at least one academic conference during your studies, in order to present your work to a wider audience. Talk to your supervisor about how to fund such trips. Many organisations, including the University, have travel awards for which you may apply.

Insurance

If you travel to a conference or summer school on university business, you must ensure you have University travel insurance. The University's Insurance Team can provide further information: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/finance/

Travel Claims

If funding is obtained from a student's supervisor or another University source, travel expenses can only be paid if the trip has been approved in advance by the supervisor. In calculating allowable expenses.

Subsistence expenses will not normally be paid unless an overnight stay is required. In cases of hardship, it may be possible to arrange for advance payment of expenses.

For documentation and further information please contact the Payments Management department, http://www.sussex.ac.uk/finance/

Transferable Skills Training

Research Councils are increasingly expecting their students to be given training in additional skills, and a report by the Institute for Employment Studies (commissioned by EPSRC) showed that employers particularly valued Communication Skills, Team Working and Problem Solving.

The Doctoral School coordinates professional development opportunities from multiple units (e.g. Library, Careers, Teaching and Learning, IT Services, etc) for all doctoral researchers at Sussex. These transferable skills opportunities range from workshops and lectures to e-learning modules and researcher-led open-discussions in the Research Hive in the Library.

Examples of these opportunities that take place throughout the year include:

- **Technical skills:** SPSS, LaTeX, UNIX, Matlab, Emacs, STATA, EndNote, NVivo, Dreamweaver, Writing your thesis in Word;

- **Engagement skills:** Measuring research impact and bibliometrics, Preparing a paper for publication, Poster presentations, Science journalism, Presenting at conferences, Public engagement, Presentation design, Peer review, Getting published, Media skills, Personal webpages, Communicating research to non-specialists;

- **Researcher skills:** Literature review, Writing retreats, Writing your thesis, Preparing for the Viva, Preparing for your final year, Becoming an effective researcher, Getting research funded, Research ethics & integrity;

- **Professional skills:** Managing professional relationships, Personal effectiveness, Project Management, Career management, Bringing creativity to your career, Time Management, Applications and CVs, and the Doctoral School Mentoring programme, in which research staff mentor doctoral researchers over the course of an academic year.

Booking: Professional development events can be booked from the Doctoral School website at: www.sussex.ac.uk/researcherdev

The Research Council's GradSchools programme of transferable skills training is available for Research Council funded students only.

https://www.vitae.ac.uk/vitae-publications/vitae-library-of-resources/about-vitae-researcher-development-programmes/gradschools

These often have the format of a one-week intensive course with postgraduates from other institutions.

There are (limited) discretionary funds available to support skills training, which can be used to assist attendance at external events. Talk to your supervisor in the first instance.

Demonstrating, Teaching and Work Opportunities

Teaching work at Sussex

Some postgraduates help with the teaching and marking. For example they may support workshops and demonstrating in the undergraduate laboratories.

If you are interested, please discuss with your supervisor and inform the School Office.

Working outside Sussex University

Before taking on paid work, you should discuss with your supervisor the impact that this will have on your studies. If the need for paid work is affecting your studies you should promptly discuss your situation and options with the Director of Doctoral Studies, so that this does not adversely affect your progress and outcome of your Annual Reviews.

Local job opportunities for part-time working are advertised in the Careers and Employability Centre, who can also offer advice and career positions after graduation.
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/careers

Overseas students on a 'Tier 4' student visa can take paid work up to 20 hours per week during term time. We advise you check your visa obligations, or the UK Visas and Immigration website, for recent changes to this rule
(https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/uk-visas-and-immigration).

However, the university recommends any additional paid work should be no more than 16 hours per week throughout the year, or your research work is likely to suffer. The University provides additional visa and immigration support here:
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/internationalsupport/immigration

Photocopying, Computing, Library, Common Rooms

Photocopying and Printing

IT Services provides information on how to select and print to local printers:
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/services/clusterrooms/clusterprinting

There are also many 'multi-functional devices' on campus from which you can print, photocopy and scan:
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/help/guide?id=159

Computing & IT

The main user area and reception for IT Services is on the ground floor of the Shawcross Building.   After registration you will be issued with a username, password and email account. Full details of facilities and services specific to researchers are on the IT Services webpages at http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its/researcher

If you need access to local computing clusters, arrange this via your supervisor.

Common Rooms & Social space

Common room space for Informatics research students is in Chichester 1 Room 202, where there is a small kitchen area.   It is commonly referred to as the 'Debugging Room'.

The Library

After registration you will have a green student card which will allow you access to the main campus Library via the entry gates (your bar code is scanned on the card on entry and exit).

Most relevant journals for Engineering and Informatics can be accessed online and copies of articles downloaded.

Photocopies of other publications can be obtained by asking at the Inter-Library Request counter.

Inter-Library requests can be made online via the catalogue. If students have any queries about Inter-Library requests, call at the Information Hub on the ground floor.

The catalogue is available online from the university webpages at
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/library

Research Liaison

The Library has a small team, Research Liaison, whose job it is to support researchers at Sussex. Their main role is to make sure the Library's collections meet the needs of researchers and to provide support in using those resources effectively.

1-2-1 support

Research Liaison offer bookable 1-2-1 sessions to help researchers get the most from the Library's resources. The sessions are tailored to individual research interests, such as

- Useful online resources for your subject
- Effective searching for relevant results
- Keeping up to date with research in your area

Book a session at:
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/library/research/support

The Sussex Research Hive in the Library

researchhive@sussex.ac.uk

The Library is delighted to introduce a new designated area for researchers, open to all doctoral students and research staff. The Sussex Research Hive provides for the first time:

- Bookable meeting rooms
- Space for informal discussion and collaborative work
- Regular events for doctoral researchers and research staff

See also:
http://www.sussex.ac.uk/library/research/hive
http://www.twitter.com/sussexreshive

The Doctoral School

Supporting researchers at Sussex

The Doctoral School is a University-wide structure supporting doctoral research across all Schools of Study. Sussex has over 900 doctoral students who play a vital role in developing our vibrant intellectual culture. The Doctoral School seeks to enable doctoral students to feel fully integrated as members of this wider research community. Its web pages provide information on diverse issues including training and funding opportunities as well as the university's regulations and codes of practice for PhD researchers (with which you should be familiar).

With a new structure this year, the Doctoral School will also be organising a number of university-wide events, including a 'Welcome' for all new PhD students and a programme of speakers through the year. Please check the Doctoral School internal website for updates: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/doctoralschool/internal/

What does the Doctoral School do for doctoral researchers?

Our responsibilities to you include, but are not limited to:

- Coordinating central provision of professional development for doctoral researchers and supervisors;
- Strengthening the researcher community with interdisciplinary, university-wide academic and social events for researchers;
- Communicating and promoting researcher events in schools and departments, such as seminars, colloquia and conferences.
- Support and administer funding applications and studentships (e.g. BBSRC, ESRC, NERC, AHRC, MRC);
- Support funding applications for researchers part-way through a self-funded doctorate;
- Policy development, such as attendance monitoring of doctoral researchers and electronic thesis submission;
- Policy and regulations - handbooks for Doctoral Researchers and Research Supervisors.
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Further information and resources:

Website: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/doctoralschool/internal/
Blog: www.doctoralschool.wordpress.com
Facebook: www.facebook.com/SussexDocSchool
Twitter: @SussexDocSchool

Appeals and Complaints

Procedures for Appeals and Complaints are laid out in detail in the *Handbook for Research & Professional Doctorate Students.*   Download a copy from the Doctoral School webpages. http://www.sussex.ac.uk/doctoralschool/internal/

Where possible, complaints should be resolved informally. You may wish to contact one of the following who may assist you informally, or may support you in the process of making a formal complaint following the procedure in the above *University Handbook:*

- Your supervisor or second supervisor
- The Director of Doctoral Studies
- The Head of your respective Department (Engineering & Design or Informatics)
- A Student Advisor
- The Welfare or Education officer of the Students' Union
- Your student Representative
- A Disability Advisor

PG Representatives & Unions

Postgraduate Representatives

Your postgraduate representative is a research postgraduate in the same School who may sit on certain School committees as well as University level committees and maintain a close involvement with the Student's Union.

The Student Representative Scheme is explained in detail here:
http://www.sussexstudent.com/student-reps/

Unions

The University of Sussex Students' Union (USSU) can always be of some service if problems arise, they are situated in Falmer House. Free confidential and impartial advice, information, and support, is offered on a whole range of academic and non-academic issues:
http://www.sussexstudent.com/support

For further information about the Students' Union in general, see the website at
http://www.sussexstudent.com/

Disclaimer

The information in this Handbook is believed to be correct at the time the pages were prepared, but the School and Departments cannot be held liable for errors or omissions, and we reserve the right to change the information supplied at any time.