

School of Mathematics & Physical Sciences

# Handbook for Doctoral Researchers

Academic year 2022 - 23



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OF SUSSEX

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## Essential Information

### Where to get Help.

- **This Handbook.** To save time, please check this Handbook first. It covers the commonest issues affecting doctoral researchers.
- **Your Sussex Direct account.** Your registration details, supervisors, timetable of study (if you are taking any taught modules) and other details held about you by the University can be seen by logging in.
- **Official documentation.** The [Handbook and Regulations for Doctoral Researchers](#) explains the university rules that govern your doctoral programme. All documents can be found on the webpages for the Research Student Administration Office at [www.sussex.ac.uk/rsao](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/rsao)
- **Your main supervisor.** Consult your supervisor on all academic matters. The formal obligations and responsibilities of your supervisor are explained in the *Handbook and Regulations for Doctoral Researchers* (link above).
- **Your second supervisor.** All doctoral researchers are allocated an additional supervisor. Some second supervisors have a minimal day-to-day role in doctoral researcher 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.
- **Your Director of Doctoral Studies (Dr Miro Chlebik) or Sub-Director for Physics (Professor Daniel Litim)** You can contact us at any time, in particular if you can't resolve a matter or get help through any of the above contacts. We also welcome individual feedback on PGR matters.
- **Administrative support.** For issues concerning your funding, registration, fees, intermission etc, contact [Emma Ransley](#) in the MPS School Office or by email [mps-pgrsupport@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:mps-pgrsupport@sussex.ac.uk)
- **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/students/studentlifecentre/> or for general advice, speak to Emma.
- **Student Support Unit.** Providing support for doctoral researchers with disabilities (including claiming Disabled Student Allowance) [www.sussex.ac.uk/studentsupport](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/studentsupport)
- **Doctoral Researcher Reps.** Student reps are elected to represent the views of students in their department. They may raise these informally with individual members of staff or more formally at committee meetings. If you have an issue you would like raised, contact the relevant rep, details are on page 15.
- **General enquiries** – ask for the Research Support Team at the School Office in the foyer area of Pevensey 2 Building.

### 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.** Your School makes extensive use of email – please check your email daily.
- **Your pigeonhole.** Pigeonholes for doctoral researchers are in the main foyer of Pevensey-2, near the photocopier.

- **Notice Boards.** The postgraduate notice boards are in corridor adjacent to the Pevensey 2 foyer area, outside the School Office. Please check this regularly for upcoming events.
- **Staff contact details.** Contact details of all staff are here:  
<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/profiles/search/>. Staff responsibilities are listed overleaf.
- **The School website and Department webpages**  
<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/mps/internal/researchstudents>  
(This page is specifically for Doctoral Researcher matters).  
<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/physics>  
<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/maths>
- **Your postal address** at the University is c/o Postgraduate Pigeonholes, School of Mathematical & Physical Sciences, Pevensey-2 Building, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton BN1 9QH

## Staff Responsibilities & Contact details

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

**Full staff, technician, and doctoral researcher lists can be found here:**

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/maths/people/peoplelists>

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/physics/people/peoplelists>

*Internal phone numbers are the same as the final four digits of the external number.*

### Head of School

Professor Peter Thomas

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### Head of Department of Mathematics

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### Director of Research & Knowledge Exchange

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### School Administrator

Mrs Gemma Harman

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**School Technical and Administrative Supervisor**

Dr Cassandra Churchwell

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T: 01273 876606

**Research & Enterprise Coordinator**

Mrs Sinead Rance

E: [S.Rance@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:S.Rance@sussex.ac.uk), [mpsresearchsupport@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:mpsresearchsupport@sussex.ac.uk)

T: +44 1273 877638

**Postgraduate Research Coordinator**

Mrs Emma Ransley

E: [E.L.Ransley@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:E.L.Ransley@sussex.ac.uk), [mps-pgrsupport@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:mps-pgrsupport@sussex.ac.uk)

T: +44 1273 876762

## Your Thesis and University Registration

**Why you must plan your Project.**

For most doctoral researchers, the project is likely to take from 3 to 3.5 years to complete. 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 rarely have funds to support doctoral researchers beyond the duration of their awards, and registered doctoral researchers 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 Interim Review in December and your Annual Review in May will help you keep 'on track' in planning and executing your project.

For new doctoral researchers, an Interim Review is carried out by your first and second supervisors at the end of your first term of registration (or second term if you are part-time).

**Award criteria for the PhD and MPhil**

You should check the current training requirement for your course at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/mps/internal/researchstudents/phd-in-maths2> for Mathematics doctoral researchers and <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/mps/internal/researchstudents/phd-in-physics-astronomy> for Physics and Astronomy doctoral researchers

**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 ([researchstudentoffice@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:researchstudentoffice@sussex.ac.uk)) to ask for an application form, 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 doctoral researcher for your fourth year. If your funding has ended, you will have to pay the 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 student' may be allowed. Pre-submission status is intended for doctoral researchers who are writing up, and your access to university facilities is accordingly limited to the Library, IT services, and the Careers service. You may not have access to office or laboratory space, and only limited access to supervision. Pre-submission fees are currently £125 per quarter or £500 for one academic year and are payable by the doctoral researcher.

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

### A “paper-style” PhD thesis

In Mathematics and in Astronomy, your PhD or MPhil thesis need not follow the traditional internal structure.

Optionally, you may submit your thesis as a bound set of papers, typically 2 - 5 in number. They need not be published papers.

They should be accompanied by an original literature review (if such review is insufficient within each component paper) and a discussion of how all the reported research fits together to tell a coherent story. The recommended size of this additional material is 6000 words.

All the standard university regulations for a PhD thesis have to be met.

A doctoral researchers may use this structure only with their main supervisor's consent.

More information can be found on the doctoral researchers webpages:  
<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/mps/internal/researchstudents>

### 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.

## Attendance & Absences

### Attendance

You should be attending for about 40 hours per week if full-time or 27 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.

Supervisors are required to monitor the attendance of all doctoral researchers. The university is under obligation to inform the UK Border Agency of non-attendance by overseas (non-EU) doctoral researchers.

### 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. An application form can be found on Research Student Administration Office webpages at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/rsao/forms/>.

You may only make an application for intermission in advance. An application for retrospective intermission is not permitted. A maximum of one year of intermission is permitted during your research degree. Intermission is taken in periods of months, beginning on the first of a month

Please be aware that intermission is not a right and the University may set conditions for your return.

Should it be necessary for you to request intermission you should consult your main supervisor in the first instance. You should then complete an application form which is available from the Research and Enterprise Coordinator in your School. If your supervisor supports your request they will make a recommendation to the Director of Doctoral Studies who will notify the Research Student Administration Office of the final decision. The Research Student Administration Office will then write to you to notify you of the decision. There are no fees payable during Intermission and you are expected to withdraw and not attend the university; you should not be using university facilities or your allocated office or laboratory in the School while on intermission.

Intermission may require that your funding body be informed.

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

See the doctoral researchers webpages for the university policy on absence for Paternity Leave, Maternity Leave, Annual Leave, and Adoption Leave.  
<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/mps/internal/researchstudents>

## Responsibilities of Doctoral Researchers and their Supervisors

Both supervisor and doctoral researcher have responsibilities. A full exposition of their respective responsibilities can be found in the Appendix to this Handbook.

**For the doctoral researchers** the responsibilities include maintaining contact, attending regularly, raising any problems in good time, and providing progress reports when required.

**The supervisor** must complete an annual report on the doctoral researcher's progress, provide support and advice, particularly if the working environment is hazardous, and keep to a schedule of regular meetings, among other duties.

## 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](mailto: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 doctoral researchers

Supervisors are responsible for the health and safety of the doctoral researchers 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 read the Science Safety Procedures and Guidance information on the HSO webpages.

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/hso/specialist/sciencesafety>



This page details the precautionary measures that must be undertaken, particularly in hazardous areas such as laboratories. They include safe use of apparatus, chemicals, lasers and radiation, radioactive materials, machinery and gases including compressed air.

All new doctoral researchers should attend the *Laboratory & Office Safety* lecture offered as part of the induction programme.

## Your Progression Reviews

### About your Progression Review

The School considers it important you have a regular formal check on your progress. This is also a University requirement.

Your progress reviews should be helpful to you. You will get independent feedback on your progress and an opportunity to give feedback on the supervision you are receiving. You can also comment on the School support and facilities for PhD researchers, and request changes. You will receive guidance on your career objectives.

Starting with the September 2020 intake, doctoral researchers have the following schedule of Progression reviews. Earlier intakes have only a single review each academic year, normally taken over the summer. Part-time researchers have adjusted timescales.

1. A Starter Review, normally conducted by your two supervisors, about 3 months after you first register at Sussex.
2. A main Progression Review in your first year, about 9 months after you registered.
3. Two more Progression Reviews each 12 months after the last.
4. A Thesis Readiness Review normally held 2 months before your funding ends (if you have a studentship via the School), or 3 months before your maximum registration date.
5. Additionally, if your research is running into difficulties, the Director of Doctoral Studies may ask you to take an Interim Review. You will get as much help as possible to resolve the problems you are facing and find a clear direction forward.

The actual date you take each Review will depend on the date you started at Sussex. The dates will be adjusted forward if you need to take Intermission (Temporary withdrawal).

You will have a timetable of your Review dates in your Box folder which is used for all Review documentation. Contact the School office on [mps-pgrsupport@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:mps-pgrsupport@sussex.ac.uk) if you don't have a timetable.

You can find full details of the Review system on the Research Student webpages, here: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/mps/internal/researchstudents/progression-reviews>

When it is time to start preparations for your next Review, you will get a reminder email from the School office. After that, it is up to you to get yourself reviewed by preparing the documents and contacting your reviewers. You are asked to complete your reviews by the deadline date given on your timetable.

## Research Seminar Programmes

### Department of Physics & Astronomy

Doctoral researchers are expected to attend the relevant seminars of at least one of the series in the Department on a regular basis.

Lists of forthcoming talks are available from the relevant organiser, and are advertised by email or on the web pages:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/epp/research/seminars>

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/tpp/research/seminars>

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/astronomy/newsandevents/calendar>

In addition, there is an occasional series of Physics and Astronomy Colloquia, at which “big-name” speakers give general talks at a level suitable for everyone. These occur about once per term, and should be attended by all postgraduates, postdocs and faculty.

While the talks may not be on topics close to the doctoral researcher’s project, it is an important part of training in research to be exposed to spoken accounts of ongoing research and to learn how to give such verbal reports.

### Department of Mathematics

A programme of seminars and lectures is advertised by email to all doctoral researchers and faculty, and also appear on notice boards and internal webpages.

The Maths & Applications Sussex Seminars (MASS) are advertised here:

<http://www.maths.sussex.ac.uk/cgi-bin/World/seminar/index.cgi>

The Analysis and PDEs seminar series can be found here:

[http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Users/gk207/APDE\\_Sussex.html](http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Users/gk207/APDE_Sussex.html)

## Going to Conferences, Summer Schools & Travel

As a doctoral researcher you should expect to attend at least one international conference during your studies, in order to present your work to a wider audience.

### Insurance

If you travel to a conference or summer school on university business, you must ensure you have University travel insurance.

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/finance/services/corporateaccounting/insurance>

Insurance may not be needed on some Research Council-funded trips where the insurance cover is automatic.

### Travel & Subsistence

Travel expenses can only be paid if the trip has been approved in advance by the doctoral researcher’s supervisor. In calculating allowable expenses, it will be assumed that postgraduates possess student railcards, which they will use when possible.

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.

### How to re-claim

You should submit your claim using the Student Expenses Claim form which can be printed from <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/finance/forms> or collected from Emma in the School Office. When complete, bring the form to Emma who will fill out the Account Code column and send it off for you. You will also need to bring your receipts, of which you should first make a copy for your own records.

### Purchasing

Purchasing is usually done via the Unit 4 Finance system. Details for setting up an account can be found at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/finance/how/using-the-finance-system>

## Transferable Skills Training

The UK Research Councils are increasingly expecting their doctoral researchers to have training in additional skills. 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: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/researcherdev>

The Vitae programme of transferable skills training is available for doctoral researchers in MPS: <https://www.vitae.ac.uk/events>

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

## Coursework Requirements

### Department of Mathematics

Currently there is no required coursework for doctoral researchers in the Department of Mathematics. According to your academic needs, as discussed and agreed between you and your supervisor, you take modules from a range of:

- specialised PhD level (level 8) modules, and
- Mathematics MSc modules (level 7).

Mathematics EPSRC-funded doctoral researchers are required to undertake at least 100 contact hours of mathematical broadening training. This applies whether you are fully or partially funded by EPSRC.

The Director of Doctoral Studies will not approve entry to the Research Degree Examination for Mathematics doctoral researchers who have not completed the coursework requirements.

Visit <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/mps/internal/researchstudents/phd-in-maths2> for more details.

## Department of Physics & Astronomy

During their first two years, doctoral researchers are required to attend, and gain credit for, postgraduate modules amounting to a minimum of 75 credits.

Modules available can be found on the Department's internal webpages:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/mps/internal/departments/physicsandastronomy/>

For modules in which the coursework contributes 20% or more of the assessment, doctoral researchers will be exempted from the unseen end-of-year examination if they obtain a coursework mark of 60% or more. This exemption applies only to the formal Unseen Examinations sat in invigilated examination hall conditions in late May or early June each year. *In-class tests, "open note exams" and "take away papers" forming part of the assessed coursework are not excused.*

All module requirements must be satisfied by the end of the second year at the latest.

Doctoral researchers with an MPhys may apply, *at the start of the first term of registration*, for exemption from modules up to a value of 45 credits, and those with an MSc for the full quota of 75 credits. They must, however, be able to show that they have successfully completed a module with similar content to one of those offered here.

Fifteen credits will be awarded to those doctoral researchers who participate in the Particle Physics Summer School at the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory.

The Director of Doctoral Studies will not approve entry to the Research Degree Examination for Physics & Astronomy doctoral researchers who have not completed the coursework requirements.

## Selecting your Modules

Download a *Research Student Module Choice Form* from the Research Student webpages, <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/mps/internal/researchstudents>. Your supervisor should sign the form which must be returned to Emma in the School Office. If you are requesting an exemption from the taught module requirement you should also attach a copy of your BSc/MSc transcript.

You must select your modules within the first two weeks of registration. After you have selected your modules, they will appear in your study timetable on Sussex Direct.

## Your web profile – how to set it up

Displaying your professional profile on the University webpages is good for you. People in the University, and externally, can verify that you are indeed a doctoral researcher here. You can use the profile to build a record of your achievements during your PhD that you can use for future job applications. It's also good for the School to demonstrate the very active doctoral researcher community we have here in Mathematics & Physics.

You can request a profile by following this instruction:

- login to Sussex Direct
- click Personal and then Web Profile
- click the Sign Up button

The Doctoral School will set this up - it takes a few days and then you can choose how much (or little) information you want to put in.

More information can be found here,

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/internal/doctoralschool/researcherdev/onlineprofile>

## Demonstrating, Teaching and Work Opportunities

### Teaching work at Sussex

Some postgraduates are needed each term to help with the teaching and marking in the undergraduate workshops and demonstrating in the undergraduate laboratories.

If you are interested, please discuss with your supervisor. Further details are here

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/mps/internal/mps-tutors>

If you wish to take on teaching work, prospective Doctoral Tutors are required to complete the Starting to Teach module prior to undertaking any tutoring work. Details of this will be given to you as part of the induction programme.

### Working outside the University of Sussex

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 doctoral researchers 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 Border Agency website, for any recent changes to this rule. (<http://www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk/>) However, Sussex University recommends any additional paid work should be limited to a maximum of 16 hours per week throughout the year, or your research work is likely to suffer.

## Photocopying, Computing, Library & Common Rooms

### Photocopying

There are Multi-Function Devices (Printer, Photocopier, Scanner) in the Pevensey-2 main foyer area, the 5C Kitchen and the landings on level 4 and 5. Please ask Emma Ransley for instructions on joining the print queue.

### 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 are on the IT Services webpages at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/its>

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

### **Common Rooms & Social space**

Common room space for doctoral researchers, staff and faculty is the main foyer of Pevensey-2 and in the 3, 4 and 5C corridors of Pevensey-3, where there are communal kitchen areas.

## **The Library & the Research Hive**

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

Most relevant journals for Mathematics and the Physical sciences can be accessed on-line and copies of articles downloaded.

The catalogue is available on-line from the university webpages at <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/library>

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 doctoral researchers have any queries about Inter-Library requests, call at the Information Hub on the ground floor.

### **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/informationfor/postgraduates.html>

### **The Sussex Research Hive in the Library**

[researchhive@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:researchhive@sussex.ac.uk)

The Library has a designated area for researchers, open to all doctoral researchers 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/researchhive>

<http://www.twitter.com/sussexreshive>

## The Doctoral School

The Doctoral School is a University-wide structure supporting doctoral research across all Schools of Study. Sussex has over 900 doctoral researchers who play a vital role in developing our vibrant intellectual culture. The Doctoral School seeks to enable doctoral researchers 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.

Information about services and support offered can be found here:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/internal/doctoralschool/new-doctoral-researchers>

## Appeals and Complaints

### Problems and Grievances

If you are facing any problems or grievances, you should first consult your main supervisor, or your second supervisor. If this does not remedy the issue contact the relevant (Sub-) Director of Doctoral Studies (see page 4 of this Handbook).

You can also contact Emma in the School Office for general advice. If you wish to meet her confidentially please email [E.L.Ransley@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:E.L.Ransley@sussex.ac.uk) to arrange a meeting.

For non-academic problems the Student Life Centre

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/studentlifecentre/> offers confidential support and assistance to all registered doctoral researchers.

### Appeals and Complaints

Procedures for Appeals and Complaints are laid out in detail in the *Handbook for Doctoral Researchers* here: <http://www.sussex.ac.uk/rsao/regulations/>

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

- Your Supervisor or second Supervisor
- The Director or Sub-Director of Doctoral Studies
- The Head of your respective Department (Maths, or Physics & Astronomy)
- A Student Advisor (in the Student Life Centre)
- The Welfare or Education officer of the Students' Union
- Your student Representative
- A Disability Advisor

## PG Representatives & the Students' Union

### 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 Students' Union.

The Student Representative Scheme is explained in detail here:

<http://www.sussexstudent.com/student-reps/>

Currently, your representatives are Sean Moore and Robert Clemenson for Physics and Astronomy and Alexandros Skouras for Mathematics.

Doctoral researchers can meet their representatives at the Postgraduate Research Student Committee, normally held once each term. The Committee is attended by the Directors of Doctoral Studies and is intended as a forum to raise issues of concern to doctoral researchers and organise events, both academic and social.

### Unions

The University of Sussex Students' Union (USSU) can always be of some service if problems arise. The Student Advice Centre (SAC) <http://www.sussexstudent.com/advice> is situated in Falmer House. Free confidential and impartial advice, information, and support, is offered on a whole range of academic and non-academic issues. For details of drop-in times, or to book an appointment, please contact USSU reception in Falmer House on (87)7038

The Students' Union has a Buddy Scheme to help new students settle in at Sussex. Contact them if you would like to take advantage of this, or would like to volunteer to be a buddy.

<http://www.sussexstudent.com/buddyscheme>

For further information visit the Students' Union 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.

## Appendix

*The material below is extracted from the Handbook for Doctoral Researchers.*

### 3 RESPONSIBILITIES OF DOCTORAL RESEARCHERS AND THEIR SUPERVISORS

- 3.1 All doctoral researchers should be provided at minimum with a 'main' and 'additional' supervisor. In the case of joint supervision, one of the supervisors will be designated as the 'main' supervisor for administrative purposes, and so that you have a clear point of contact in the event of difficulties.
- 3.2 An 'additional supervisor' (or the supervisor not designated the 'main' in the case of joint supervision) should be able to provide advice and support when the 'main' supervisor is not available. In the event of loss of a supervisor, your department and school are responsible for finding a suitable replacement, and ensuring that arrangements are in place to support you during any interim period.
- 3.3 Your responsibilities as a doctoral researcher, and the responsibilities of those involved in your supervision, are outlined in the following two sections.

#### Responsibilities of doctoral researchers

- 3.4 The responsibilities that must be observed by doctoral researchers are as follows:
  - (1) maintaining regular contact with the main supervisor;
  - (2) discussing with the supervisor/s the type of guidance and comment which will be most helpful, and agreeing upon a schedule of meetings;
  - (3) taking the initiative in raising problems or difficulties, however elementary they may seem;
  - (4) for the safety of themselves and others, doctoral researchers 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;
  - (5) preparation of a research outline to be approved during the doctoral researcher's first year of study;
  - (6) 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;
  - (7) 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;
  - (8) providing annually a brief formal report to the Director of Doctoral Studies as part of the annual review process;
  - (9) deciding when he or she wishes to submit the thesis, taking due account of the supervisor/s opinion, which is however advisory only, and of the need to take account of University requirements regarding the length, format and organisation of the thesis;

- (10) taking responsibility for their own personal and professional development;
  - (11) 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;
  - (12) being familiar with institutional regulations and policies that affect them, including the regulations for their qualification;
  - (13) 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.
- 3.5 A doctoral researcher 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 concerned who will advise on any grievance procedures. In particular, the doctoral researchers should ask to meet the Director of Doctoral Studies if the doctoral researcher 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.

#### **Responsibilities of research degree supervisors**

- 3.6 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 and then to Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research).
- 3.7 The main supervisor is expected to provide the doctoral researcher with advice at every stage in the planning and conduct of research and in the writing of the thesis and to ensure 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:
- (1) to complete an annual report on the doctoral researcher's progress for consideration
  - (2) within the framework of the school and/or department's annual review procedures, for later submission to the Director of Doctoral Studies;
  - (2) 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;
  - (3) if working in a potentially hazardous research environment, ensuring and monitoring that the doctoral researchers 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;
  - (4) giving detailed advice on the necessary completion of successive stages of work so that the whole may be submitted within the scheduled time;
  - (5) ensuring that the doctoral researcher is made aware of inadequacy of progress or of standards of work below that generally expected;
  - (6) identifying prospective external examiners.



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

- (1) to agree a schedule of regular meetings with the doctoral researcher, in accordance with School policy and in the light of discussion of arrangements with the student;
- (2) being accessible to the doctoral researcher at other appropriate times when he or she may need advice;
- (3) giving 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;
- (4) being familiar with the standard expected of research degree examiners, consistent with the guidance laid down by relevant Research Councils;
- (5) requesting written work as appropriate, and returning such work with constructive criticism and in reasonable time;
- (6) arranging as appropriate for the doctoral researcher to talk about his or her work to faculty or graduate seminars, and to be well briefed about the procedures involved in oral examinations;
- (7) providing clarification on the guidance or comment that will be offered on the doctoral researcher's written submissions;
- (8) ensuring that the doctoral researcher 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;
- (9) providing training in the ethical, legal and other conventions used in the conduct of research, and supporting the doctoral researcher in the consideration of these as appropriate.
- (10) initial assessment, and ongoing review, of the doctoral researcher's training and skills development needs, in accordance with the Vitae Researcher Development Framework, and taking account of the training provision available at Sussex;
- (11) ensuring that the doctoral researcher is aware of institutional-level sources of advice, including careers guidance, health and safety legislation and equal opportunities policy;
- (12) maintaining and developing the necessary skills and expertise in order to perform all facets of the role effectively (including taking up appropriate continuing professional development opportunities)