UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

Division of Student Experience

Procedures on Research Degrees 2025-26[1]

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[1] *The overall structure of this document, and some wording and specific policy points mirror the equivalent policy at a comparator institution, identified as an example of good practice during the development of this document.*

1. Overview

Scope

1.1 The Procedures on Research Degrees (PoRD) set out the University's position on research degree programmes for postgraduate researchers (PGRs), PGR supervisors, Progression Review Assessors, examiners, and other University staff with responsibility for PGRs.

1.2 This document has been drawn up with reference to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: Research Degrees (2018). The Postgraduate Researcher Sub-Committee (PGRSC; formerly the Doctoral School Board), reporting to Senate via University Research and Innovation Committee (URIC), is responsible for implementing the PoRD and reviewing it on an annual basis.

1.3 This document supplements, but does not supersede, the University's regulations for research degrees (Regulation 23) and the University of Sussex Academic Framework.

1.4 This document comes into effect from 01 August 2025. Appendix 1 lays out how each section of this document should be applied to PGRs who were registered prior to this date.

1.5 This document applies to the degrees of PhD, integrated PhD (iPhD), and MPhil. The PhD by Published Works is detailed separately in Appendix 2: Framework for PhD by Published Works. This document refers to all PGRs unless otherwise stated.

1.6 Any variations to or derogations from this document to accommodate the delivery of a specific research degree (e.g. one involving a multi-institution collaboration, or which has to align with funder expectations) must be approved by the PGRSC during the programme approval process. See the Research Degrees Management webpage for a list of agreed variations.

1.7 There are additional procedures, frameworks and statements that apply to:

- Remote vivas: Appendix 3
- Integrated PhD programmes: Appendix 4
- Collaborative Research Degrees: Appendix 5
- The use of Generative AI by PGRs: Appendix 6

Responsibility for PGRs and PGR programmes

1.8 PGRs, their Faculty/School and the University are responsible for maintaining records relating to a PGR's research degree, including but not limited to supervision, progress and training.

1.9 Within Faculties, the Associate Dean (Research and Innovation; ADRI), with responsibility delegated to appropriate academic leads within Faculties/Schools where relevant, has oversight of all PGR matters and is responsible for ensuring academic colleagues understand and work within these procedures.

1.10 PGRs are responsible for keeping contact details (addresses, phone number and personal email) up-to date via Sussex Direct, and for notifying the University of any change of circumstances affecting their registration.

1.11   The PGRSC and URIC are responsible for maintaining oversight of institutional strategy relating to PGRs and research degrees.

1.12   The PGRSC is responsible, at the institutional level, for the quality assurance and enhancement of the PGR experience and of research degrees. This includes responsibility for approving: new research degrees, amendments to existing research degrees, and any collaborative provision relating to PGRs (e.g. Collaborative Research Degrees; see Appendix 5).

1.13   Within a Faculty/School, the local PGR Committee (Faculty PGRC) has oversight of PGR matters.

Approval of new research degrees and programme amendments

1.14   All new research degrees, and the amendment or withdrawal of existing research degrees, require the approval of the PGRSC. Where there is a taught element, approval from the Portfolio Approval Sub-Committee (PASC) may also be required.

1.15   The relevant *pro forma* (see the Research Degrees Management webpage) must be submitted with the required supporting documentation, which may include comments (on the relevant *pro forma*) from an external assessor, where a new research degree is proposed. The Chair of the PGRSC may decide that comments from an external assessor on a research degree proposal are not required, e.g. if the proposed research degree has already undergone external review as part of a bid to a research council or other funding body.

2.   The criteria for the award of research degrees

2.1   The degrees of PhD and MPhil are obtained by research and are assessed through the submission of a thesis (or equivalent) and an oral examination (the *viva voce* or 'viva').

2.2   The degree of PhD is a Doctoral degree (level 8 of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in Degree-Awarding Bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ)).

2.3   The degree of MPhil is a Master's degree (level 7 of the FHEQ).

The descriptor for the award of the degrees of PhD

2.4   The degree of PhD (including iPhDs) is awarded to PGRs who have demonstrated all the following, as per the FHEQ:

●   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;
●   systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
●   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;

- a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- 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;
- 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:

- 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.

2.5   A PhD thesis (or equivalent) must contain a substantial original contribution to knowledge.

The descriptor for the award of the degree of MPhil

2.6   The degree of MPhil is awarded to PGRs who have demonstrated all of the following, as per the FHEQ:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice;
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques available to their own research or advanced scholarship;
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;
- conceptual understanding that enables the PGR:

    - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline; and
    - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level;
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level;

and will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:

  - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
  - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations; and
  - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

2.7   An MPhil thesis (or equivalent) is expected to display a comprehensive knowledge of some part or aspect of the field of study, and a recognisable original contribution to knowledge or understanding.

3.   Selection, admission and induction of PGRs

3.1   The selection and admission of PGRs to research degrees is overseen by the Admissions Office and applications must be made via the University's online application portal.

3.2   The entry requirements for individual programmes – including academic qualification(s), references and English language requirements – are stipulated on the admissions webpage for the relevant research degree. Applicants requiring sponsorship under a Student visa may be subject to additional entry requirements or credibility checks.

3.3   Entry points are nominated as September, January and May though start points at the beginning of any month may be possible; any programme-specific variations are stipulated on the admissions webpage for the relevant research degree.

Admissions decisions

3.4   A decision to admit an applicant will involve at least two members of academic staff, normally including the ADRI, or nominee(s)) and the prospective main supervisor.

3.5   It is strongly recommended that Faculties/Schools should ensure that individuals involved in admitting PGRs have received training and guidance to prepare them for this role.

3.6   Before an offer of a place, all applicants should be interviewed, even when they are known to the prospective supervisor. This may either be in person or, where this is not practicable, by video-conferencing. The purpose of the interview is to allow the Faculty/School to take a view on the broad viability of the project as well as the credibility of the potential PGR. The interview will normally involve the prospective supervisor and at least one additional academic colleague, i.e. the ADRI or nominee(s).

3.7   Successful applicants will receive an offer letter from the University from Admissions which sets out the key details of the research degree, any conditions attached, and which draws attention to the University's Terms and Conditions. The offer letter forms a binding contract on the University and, upon acceptance, on the applicant. Any additional terms and conditions relating to funding, where relevant, will be outlined in a separate award or funding confirmation letter.

Entry with advanced standing

3.8   Exceptionally, permission may be granted, on the recommendation of the relevant ADRI, or nominee(s), for a shortened minimum registration period for an individual on the basis of their

prior experiential learning in research other than transferring in from another university (for example, for an experienced industrial researcher; see 7.45-7.52 for transfer in from another university). Decisions to admit on the basis of advanced standing must be made at the point of admission, and with the approval of the Chair of the PGRSC. The decision as to what a suitable minimum period of registration will be is a matter of academic judgement, as determined by those making the admissions decision.

3.9   In such cases, the maximum period of registration will be calculated on the basis of the normal maximum minus the time credited under entry with advanced standing. For example, in the case of a full-time PGR on a standard four year PhD who is credited with one year's advanced standing, their maximum period of registration will be three years.

3.10   With reference to section 9 of this document, if a PGR is granted approval for a shortened minimum period of registration, they must meet the criteria for a second Formal Progression Review no later than 12 months (or part-time equivalent) after commencing their research degree. If they do not meet the criteria for the second formal review of progress at the second attempt, they may then be assessed (at the same meeting) against the criteria for the first formal review of progress and, if successful, continue their research degree but revert to the standard minimum registration period for the relevant degree. In such cases, the PGR will incur additional tuition fees.

Readmittance following withdrawal

3.11   Where a PGR withdrew from the University voluntarily prior to end of their maximum period of registration and before submission of the thesis, they may apply for readmission to recommence the relevant research degree via the online application system. Readmission is not guaranteed; consideration will be given to factors such as the availability of supervision, the time elapsed since the original registration and therefore the currency of the research already undertaken, and the feasibility of the PGR completing within the remaining time available to them (see below).

3.12   Where withdrawal has been enforced (e.g. as the result of a Formal Progression Review), and where any appeal was unsuccessful, or the PGR voluntarily withdrew post-submission, a former PGR will not be considered for readmission to continue the same research project.

3.13   A PGR readmitted to complete the research project and research degree from which they previously withdrew will be required to complete within the maximum period of registration for the relevant research degree (see section 6), minus the time already elapsed under their previous registration(s). Minimum periods of registration also apply. For example, in the case of a full-time PGR on a standard four year PhD who was registered for 18 months before they withdrew, they will have six months minimum registration remaining following re-admittance, and 30 months maximum registration remaining.

3.14   Exceptionally, permission may be granted, on the recommendation of the relevant ADRI, or nominee(s), for a longer total maximum period of registration for an individual on the basis of the need, for example, to permit a period of adjustment where new supervisors are appointed, or the context of the research has changed substantially during the period of withdrawal. Such requests must be made at the point of readmission, and require the approval of the Chair of the PGRSC.

3.15   Where a former PGR wishes to commence an entirely new project, they may apply for admission via the online application system as per any new applicant, regardless of the reason for withdrawal unless specifically prohibited from readmittance. Admission is not guaranteed. Where the PGR is

admitted to undertake a new project, they will have the full maximum period of registration available to them.

Induction and handbook

3.16　The Sussex Researcher School (SRS) provides centralised induction events for PGRs, typically in October and February. PGRs are expected to attend the University induction relevant to their start date.

3.17　In addition to the central induction run by the SRS, Faculties/Schools must provide a comprehensive, local induction programme for all new PGRs (including those who do not commence their research degree at the start of the academic year, are part-time or are working at a distance) that includes Faculty/School-specific information on supervisory arrangements, research and skills training, networking opportunities, facilities, good research conduct, and health and safety, including (where appropriate) health and safety while undertaking work away from the University (e.g. fieldwork and research visits). Faculty/School inductions should be planned with reference to the induction checklist issued by the SRS, and processes should be reviewed annually at the relevant Faculty PGRC.

3.18　Faculties/Schools should provide new PGRs with an appropriate handbook (or equivalent resource) for reference.

4.　Supervision

4.1　Supervisors play a fundamental role in supporting PGRs throughout their research degree. The exact nature of the supervisory process will vary depending on the academic discipline and stage of registration.

Appointment of supervisors

Minimum supervision arrangements

4.2　Each PGR will have at least two supervisors, employed by the University of Sussex, appointed by the ADRI, or nominee(s), in the relevant Faculty/School: a main supervisor (normally at least 50%) and an additional supervisor. Where appropriate, further supervisors may be appointed to the supervisory team.

4.3　The main supervisor is the primary point of contact both for the PGR and for administrative purposes. The additional supervisor(s) will provide advice and support when the main supervisor is not available. The supervisory team should be identified at the point of admission.

Eligibility to supervise

4.4　All members of the supervisory team must have a doctoral degree, or equivalent research experience.

4.5　At least one supervisor should be actively engaged in research in an area relevant to the proposed PGR project.

4.6   The University's position regarding personal relationships between members of the University community is laid out in the [Personal Relationships Policy](#).

4.7   The main supervisor must be a member of the University's staff on a permanent contract or a fixed-term contract that extends beyond the expected completion date of the PGR's research degree.

4.8   The main supervisor will normally be on a minimum of grade 7 (lecturer equivalent). Where exceptions are considered, it is the responsibility of the ADRI, or nominee(s), to ensure that the appointment is appropriate.

4.9   The main supervisor will normally have supervised at least one PGR to successful completion at the relevant level; however, where the supervisory team includes an appropriately experienced supervisor, a new supervisor may act as a main supervisor with the experienced supervisor maintaining oversight of progress and providing mentoring as appropriate.

Remote supervisors

4.10   Where, in exceptional circumstances, a main supervisor works permanently or predominantly remotely, the additional supervisor must be campus-based and able to interact with the PGR on campus. In such cases, the PGR must be advised of and agree to the supervisory arrangements in advance of registration, and the relevant ADRI, or nominee(s), should consider assigning a larger portion of the supervisory responsibility to the additional supervisor than may be normal Faculty/School practice (with reference to 4.2). Faculties/Schools should assess the risks of such an arrangement on a case-by-case basis; health and safety considerations are likely to render the assignment of a remote main supervisor inappropriate for laboratory-based projects.

Supervisory load

4.11   The recommended limit on the number of supervisees that a main supervisor has is six full-time equivalent PGRs, to be exceeded only in exceptional circumstances with the agreement of the ADRI or nominee(s).

4.12   The maximum limit may vary between disciplines and according to factors such as a supervisor's experience and other duties and the stage and mode of registration of the PGRs, but each Faculty/School should have a stated normal maximum.

External Supervisors

4.13   In certain circumstances, an external supervisor may be appointed in addition to the Sussex-based supervisory team, to provide pre-agreed levels of supervisory support.

4.14   The appointment of an external supervisor is approved by the Chair of PGRSC following the submission of the appropriate documentation by the Faculty/School to Student Data and Records.

4.15   An external supervisor, where appointed, cannot act as the main supervisor.

4.16   An external supervisor may be appointed when:

    i.   the PGR's research degree involves an inter-institutional collaboration agreement where co-supervision is an expectation of the terms of the arrangement;

ii.   specialist expertise or practitioner guidance is required that is not currently available within the University (e.g. a supervisor based with an industry partner); or

iii.   a Sussex supervisor leaves the University and the PGR does not wish to or cannot transfer institutions and has progressed so substantially in their research that altering the supervision arrangements would be detrimental to the outcome (noting 4.30).

Training and monitoring of supervisors

4.17   All supervisors (including external supervisors) are required to complete the University's suite of supervisor training modules. It is also required that all supervisors repeat the training every three years by way of a refresher, and to ensure they are up to date with the latest regulations, procedures and guidance. Failure to complete the required training will prevent colleagues from supervising any new PGRs until the training is completed. ADRIs, or nominee(s), are responsible for overseeing the completion of training, and should escalate any concerns via the relevant line manager.

4.18   PGRs and their supervisors are required to engage, at a mid-point each year, in a discussion to reflect on supervision, with the aim of improving the quality and efficiency of future supervision. A record of this discussion must be made online via the appropriate University central system.

Supervisory meetings

4.19   The purpose and likely frequency of supervisory meetings, both formal and informal, at different stages of the research degree, should be made clear to the PGR by the supervisor(s), at the Faculty's/School's induction at the outset of the programme, and in the Faculty's/School's PGR handbook.

4.20   The first supervision meeting should be held in line with the Framework for Initial PGR Supervision Meetings (see the [Information for supervisors webpage](#)).

4.21   A supervisory meeting, whether requested by the PGR or their supervisor(s), should normally take place within seven working days.

4.22   From the commencement of registration to the submission of the thesis, formal supervision meetings must be held throughout the year and take place at least once a month for full-time PGRs, and once every two months for part-time PGRs, and in either case more frequently if a Faculty PGRC prescribes. This applies to all PGRs, including Visiting PGRs (see section 17).

4.23   Post-submission (i.e. between submission and viva), a formal supervision meeting may be requested by the PGR. Otherwise, any supervisory interaction is expected to be more informal and to focus on preparation for the viva.

4.24   In instances of a PGR receiving an outcome of minor corrections, a formal supervision meeting should occur once within the three month corrections period (for full-time PGRs) or twice within the six month corrections period (for part-time PGRs). PGRs on a Student visa will need to ensure they comply with the minimum engagement expectations.

4.25   In instances of a PGR receiving an outcome of major corrections, formal supervision meetings should occur three times within the six month corrections period (for full-time PGRs) or six times within the twelve month corrections period (for part-time PGRs). PGRs on a Student visa will need

to ensure they comply with the minimum engagement expectations.

4.26   In instances of a PGR receiving a revise and resubmit outcome, formal supervision meetings should take place at least once a month (for full-time PGRs) or every two months (for part-time PGRs).

4.27   In all instances, the content and dates of supervision meetings must be recorded via the appropriate University of Sussex central system by the PGR within one week of the meeting taking place, and confirmed by the relevant supervisor, as per the [Attendance, Engagement and Absence Policy](#).

Absence and replacement of a supervisor

4.28   PGRs should be informed of who their first point of contact is if their main supervisor were to be temporarily unavailable; this is likely to be the co-supervisor.

4.29   In the event of a main supervisor becoming unable to continue supervising a PGR, the ADRI, or nominee(s), should inform the PGR in writing as soon as possible. A replacement supervisor should be appointed, after consultation with the PGR, within one month of the main supervisor becoming unavailable. In the meantime, the designated person (see above) should assume the role of the main supervisor.

4.30   If a PGR's research project is dependent on the supervision of a specialist member of academic staff and that member of staff leaves the University prior to the PGR submitting their thesis, or is otherwise unable to continue supervising the PGR, then the Faculty/School must seek to make alternative, comparable arrangements to supervise the PGR to complete their research degree. This may involve supporting the PGR's transfer to another institution (see section 7), or it may involve seeking comparable specialist supervision from outside the University so that the PGR can complete their research degree at Sussex. This may include employing the previous Sussex supervisor as an external supervisor, in which case an additional Sussex supervisor should be appointed in order to meet the minimum supervisory expectations under this document: see 4.2. In such cases, and noting that under 4.15 an external supervisor may not act as the main supervisor, the responsibilities of the main supervisor should be reassigned to one of the Sussex-based team.

Supervisory issues

4.31   If a PGR is unhappy with their supervision they should attempt to resolve the matter informally in the first instance. If they feel unable to discuss this directly with the relevant supervisor(s), or the problem remains unresolved having done this, then they should feel free to talk confidentially about the problem with the ADRI or nominee(s). PGRs may also approach Student Advice & Guidance for support, and the Students' Union can also provide independent advice**.**

4.32   If a resolution cannot be reached via informal routes, PGRs may submit a formal complaint to the University (see section 15).

4.33   Alleged inadequacy of supervisory arrangements during the period of registration does not constitute grounds for an academic appeal against the outcome of a Formal Progression Review or 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 (see section 14).

4.34   If a supervisor is unhappy with their supervisory relationship with a PGR, they should attempt to

resolve the matter informally in the first instance. If they feel unable to discuss this directly with the PGR, or the problem remains unresolved having done this, then they should raise the matter with the ADRI or nominee(s).

4.35   By mutual agreement between the PGR and the Faculty/School, and where permitted by the terms of the sponsor/funding body (where relevant), supervisory responsibilities can be changed, at the request of either the PGR or a supervisor.

4.36   The academic judgement as to whether an alternative supervisory arrangement is adequate for the PGR's research project ultimately rests with the ADRI or nominee(s).

5.   Responsibilities of PGRs and supervisors

5.1   The responsibilities of PGRs include:

(i)   maintaining regular contact with the main supervisor in accordance with the Attendance, Engagement and Absence Policy

(ii)   discussing with supervisor(s) the type of guidance and comment which will be most helpful, the expectations of supervision, and agreeing upon a schedule of meetings

(iii)   preparing a research plan (or Faculty/School equivalent) which must be approved by all supervisors and the ADRI or nominee(s); the Faculty/School will state the specific requirements and timing but this must be completed at the latest by the end of six months (full-time) or twelve months (part-time) registration

(iv)   keeping a record of supervisory meetings via the appropriate University of Sussex central system, to be confirmed by the supervisors

(v)   under the guidance of the supervisory team, planning a research project which is achievable within the maximum period of registration, and maintaining progress in line with the plan

(vi)   ensuring (a joint responsibility with main supervisor) that appropriate ethical approval is obtained *before* research dependent upon ethical approval commences (or, where relevant, participants are recruited)

(vii)   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

(viii)   taking the initiative in raising problems or difficulties (academic or personal) which are affecting progress

(ix)   providing annually (biennially for part-time PGRs), the work required by the Faculty/School to the ADRI, or nominee(s), as part of the Formal Progression Review process

(x)   deciding when to submit the thesis, taking due account of advice from their supervisor(s), and of Faculty/School requirements regarding the length, format and organisation of the thesis

(xi)   discussing the Researcher Development Framework with their main supervisor and completing a Training Needs Analysis within three months of registration, agreeing their development needs, attending any relevant development opportunities identified, and reviewing their training needs on an annual basis

(xii)   taking responsibility for their own personal and professional development

(xiii)   being familiar with institutional regulations and policies that affect them, including the regulations for their qualification

(xiv)   being aware of the University's Code of Practice for Research and adhering to the requirements and observing the principles contained therein

(xv)   being aware of Open Access policies and the copyright implications of publishing their thesis in the institutional repository

(xvi)   PGRs working in a 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 complete the University's risk assessment process and obtain University insurance accordingly (see section 16).

5.2   The main supervisor (normally minimum weighting 50%) and will take overall responsibility for the supervision, will be available on campus (e.g. office hours) and will support the PGR through the Formal Progression Review process, and oversee other progress monitoring and the appointment of examiners. Their responsibilities include:

(i)   beyond the introductions made via Faculty/School induction, and as appropriate, to introduce the PGR to the Faculty/School, its facilities and procedures, and to other PGRs and staff

(ii)   maintaining regular contact with the PGR in accordance with the Attendance, Engagement and Absence Policy.

(iii)   discussing the Researcher Development Framework with the PGR and complete a Training Needs Analysis within 3 months of registration (see section 10)

(iv)   agreeing a schedule of regular meetings with the PGR in accordance with Faculty's/School's requirements, consider the expectations of supervision with the supervisee, and establishing boundaries around availability

(v)   jointly with the PGR, ensuring that appropriate ethical approval is obtained *before* research dependent upon ethical approval commences (or, where relevant, participants are recruited)

(vi)   to approve the draft records of supervisory meetings via the appropriate University of Sussex central system

(vii)   to approve the research plan (or Faculty/School equivalent) produced by the PGR and ensure that it is passed on to the ADRI or nominee(s); the plan must be approved by the supervisor and the ADRI or nominee(s). Faculties/Schools will have specific requirements and timing but this must be completed at the latest by the end of six months (full-time) or twelve six months (part-time) registration

(viii) to complete an annual report on the PGR's progress for consideration within the framework of the Faculty/School and/or department's Progression Review procedures, for consideration by the ADRI or nominee(s)

(ix) to request written work as appropriate, and return such work with constructive feedback and within reasonable time

(x) to give detailed advice on the necessary completion of successive stages of work so that the thesis or equivalent may be submitted within the maximum period of registration

(xi) to ensure that the PGR is made aware of inadequate progress or standard of work in a timely way

(xii) if working in a potentially hazardous research environment, ensuring and monitoring that the PGR possesses adequate technical competence in any relevant research techniques, so that they present no undue risk to themselves, others, and/or University facilities

(xiii) to identify prospective examiners

(xiv) maintaining the necessary supervisory expertise, including undertaking all training required under section 4 of this document

(xv) exercising sensitivity to the diverse needs of individual PGRs, including but not limited to international PGRs and those with a declared disability.

Research plans and working thesis titles

5.3 PGRs must prepare a research plan (or Faculty/School equivalent) which sets out the overall plan, objectives and timetable for the project, by the end of six months (full-time) or twelve months (part-time) registration. Faculties/Schools will identify the specific deadline for completion of the plan. A form to confirm the content and working title of the PGR's thesis and research plan must be submitted by the PGR and main supervisor to the ADRI or nominee(s).

5.4 In preparing the plan, PGRs and their supervisors should note that PGRs should plan their research (and should be actively encouraged to do so by their supervisors) so that they will submit within the maximum period of registration (see section 6).

5.5 Once approved, the research plan should be reviewed regularly and submitted for consideration at each Formal Progression Review meeting.

5.6 Any subsequent substantive changes to the working title and/or research topic must be approved by the ADRI, or nominee(s), on the recommendation of the supervisory team. Where the PGR is subject to UK Visa & Immigration (UKVI) requirements, a change to the thesis title may have implications for future visa applications, and Faculties/Schools should consult the UKVI Compliance Manager, and advise the PGR to consult an International Advisor prior to any change being approved.

6.   Registration

6.1 PGRs are required to engage with their research degree as per the Attendance, Engagement and Absence Policy.

6.2   With the approval of the relevant Faculty PGRC, Faculties/Schools may set out additional expectations regarding on-campus attendance and engagement, which may vary by discipline. Where Faculties/Schools opt to impose additional expectations, these should be clearly stated in the Faculty's/School's PGR handbook or equivalent resource.

Modes of registration

Full- and part-time registration

6.3   Research degrees are available on both a full- and part-time basis, unless otherwise stated on the admissions pages. Part-time registration is considered to be 50% of full-time registration.

6.4   Individual PGRs may be subject to restrictions on the mode of registration they can undertake, e.g. on the basis of their funding or visa status.

Modes of attendance

On-campus attendance

6.5   Research degrees are expected to be undertaken in person, via regular attendance on campus, unless the research degree in question has a distance learning mode available.

Distance learning

6.6   The implementation of distance learning modes, whether on new or existing research degrees, are subject to the approval of the PGRSC.

6.7   Individual PGRs may be subject to restrictions on their ability to register on a distance learning mode, e.g. on the basis of their funding or visa status.

Periods of registration

6.8   The minimum and maximum periods of registration (i.e. from initial registration to the submission of the thesis), regardless of mode of attendance (i.e. on-campus or distance learning), are as follows:

Degree	Mode	Minimum period of registration	Maximum period of registration
PhD	Full-time	Two years	Four years
	Part-time	Four years	Eight years
Integrated PhD	Full-time	Three years	Five years
	Part-time	Six years	Ten years
MPhil	Full-time	One year	Three years
	Part-time	Two years	Six years

6.9   All PGRs should plan their research (and should be actively encouraged to do so by their supervisors) so that they will submit within the maximum period of registration or, in the case of PGRs on funded programmes (and where this is required by the funder), within the funded period where the funded period ends before the maximum period of registration.

6.10   The final deadline for submission is at the end of the maximum period of registration. Failure to submit by the final submission deadline (last day of registration, or the next working day if a weekend or Bank Holiday) will result in failure of the degree.

6.11   A PGR who wishes to submit a thesis before the end of the minimum period of registration may only do so on the recommendation of the Faculty PGRC concerned and with the permission of the Research Degree Progression & Award Board (RDPAB) following consideration of the specifics of the case and expected academic standards. In such circumstances the PGR will still be required to pay the full fees for the minimum period of registration. Once submitted, the PGR may not resubmit the thesis, prior to the examination process (see 12.17).

Pre-submission status

6.12   Following three years of full-time registration (or part-time equivalent), and only once all research work and data collection has been completed, PGRs may apply to be placed in pre-submission status. Pre-submission status entitles the PGR to a reduced tuition fee rate for the period of the approved application.

6.13   Any application for pre-submission must be made prospectively; retrospective applications will not be considered. In order for a PGR to be eligible for pre-submission, the main supervisor must approve a well-worked first draft of the PGR's thesis together with a detailed timeline and plan to submission. The application itself will normally be completed by the PGR and signed by the main supervisor. The relevant ADRI, or nominee(s), will consider the application, and the outcome processed by Student Data and Records.

6.14   Where approved, pre-submission status is granted in blocks of three months up to a maximum of twelve months. If the thesis is not submitted by the end of the period of pre-submission approved and the PGR remains within their maximum period of registration, an application for an extension to pre-submission status may be made. If no extension to pre-submission is requested, or an extension to pre-submission is not approved, the tuition fee will return to the full fee until the end of the maximum period of registration (i.e. the submission deadline). For extensions to the maximum period of registration, see section 7.

6.15   During pre-submission, entitlement to and requirement to engage with supervision continues as per this document or (where requirements are higher) as otherwise determined by the relevant Faculty/School. PGRs are not entitled to use of workrooms, laboratories or similar facilities; university accommodation; or membership of, or election to, University Committees, during pre-submission.

7.   Changes to PGRs' registration and personal circumstances (including illness)

Fitness to study

7.1   Where there are concerns about a PGR's welfare or conduct that may cause a risk to themselves or others the [Fitness to Study procedure](#) should be followed. This procedure may also be followed if there are concerns that a PGR may not be well enough to engage with their research in a safe and meaningful way following an intermission or (in the case of PGRs subject to UKVI requirements) authorised absence.

Illness

7.2   PGRs who are not subject to UKVI requirements and who will be absent from their research degree for up to one month must notify their Faculty/School. For an absence of one month or longer, PGRs should follow the procedure for intermission (see below).

7.3   Student visa holding PGRs who will be absent from their research degree due to medical or personal reasons for more than 60 days should seek guidance from the International Advice team and must follow either the procedure for authorised absence (for periods up to 60 days) described in the [Attendance, Engagement and Absence Policy](#) or the procedure for intermission (see below).

Intermission

7.4   An intermission allows a PGR to take an authorised break in their registration (sometimes referred to as a temporary withdrawal) for a documented medical or personal reason.

7.5   An intermission will not be considered in the PGR's first month of registration. Otherwise, any PGR can apply for an intermission, however, approval is not guaranteed. Intermission may also be subject to the approval of the funder concerned.

7.6   PGRs on a Student visa are advised to consult the [Attendance, Engagement and Absence Policy](#) for information on the implications of taking intermission, and for information on authorised absences. The former will require the PGR to leave the UK and thus their sponsorship will be withdrawn; the latter allows for continued registration and sponsorship whilst the break from studies is taken.

7.7   Applications for intermission will be considered by the relevant ADRI, or nominee(s), and, if approved, will be granted in periods of whole months up to a maximum of one year for full-time PGRs, or two years for part-time PGRs.

7.8   PGRs may apply for up to a further year (or two years for a part-time PGR) of exceptional intermission. In such cases, the request is referred to the Chair of the PGRSC for consideration on the recommendation of the ADRI or nominee(s).

7.9   Intermission should be applied for in advance. Intermission that is entirely retrospective will not normally be considered or approved; PGRs on a Student visa will not be considered for a retrospective intermission.

7.10   When approving a period of intermission, the University may set conditions for the PGR's return. Where intermission is taken on health grounds, the PGR will be subject to the University's [Fitness to Study procedure](#). In all cases, the PGR will be informed of their responsibilities with regards to their return, including any conditions, when they are formally notified of the approval of their application.

7.11   During a period of intermission, PGRs must take a break from their research. Access to University

resources is limited to those needing to prepare for their return.

7.12   On notification from the Faculty/School or the Chair of the PGRSC (noting 7.7-7.8), Student Data and Records will process the outcome. Where a request is approved, Student Data and Records will formally notify the PGR of the expected date of return and any conditions they need to meet to re-register (see above), and their revised maximum date of registration (i.e. their new submission deadline).

Parental leave

7.13   Intermission on the basis of parental leave will be granted up to one year via the above process.

7.14   Periods of intermission approved on the basis of parental leave will not count towards the maximum periods stated above.

7.15   Student visa holders should consult the International Advice team for advice about how periods of parental leave may affect their immigration status.

7.16   PGRs in receipt of funding are encouraged to contact the PGR Scholarships team to discuss their parental leave prior to making an application and determine the potential impacts on their funding and/or stipend payments.

7.17   In all cases, appropriate documentation should be submitted with the request (e.g. a MATB1 form in the case of maternity leave).

Extensions to the maximum period of registration

7.18   An extension to the maximum period of registration ('extension') is required for a PGR who cannot submit their thesis within the maximum period of registration and must be applied for in advance of the end of their current maximum period of registration.

7.19   Extensions are granted only in exceptional circumstances, namely, where the PGR's work has been hampered by documented exceptional medical or personal or, in the case of part-time PGRs, employment reasons. The magnitude of the research task, or failure on the part of the PGR to perceive or act upon the magnitude of the research task, is not a sufficient reason for an extension, nor is the need, in itself, to take employment.

7.20   An extension request will not normally be considered until the PGR is within three months of the end of their maximum period of registration. Extensions may also be subject to the approval of the funder concerned. A PGR's funding or Student visa sponsorship may also impose additional restrictions upon their ability to extend their maximum period of registration, which are beyond the control of the University. PGRs subject to UKVI requirements should consult the UKVI Compliance team before making any changes to their registration, who may, as necessary, refer them on to the International Advice team.

7.21   Applications for extension will be considered by the relevant ADRI, or nominee(s), and, if approved, will be granted in periods of whole months up to a maximum of one year for full-time PGRs, or two years for part-time PGRs.

7.22   PGRs may apply for up to a further year (or two years for a part-time PGR) of exceptional extension.

In such cases, the request is referred to the Chair of the PGRSC for consideration on the recommendation of the ADRI or nominee(s).

7.23   On notification from the Faculty/School or the Chair of the PGRSC (noting 7.21-7.22), Student Data and Records will process the outcome. Where a request is approved, Student Data and Records will formally notify the PGR of their revised maximum date of registration (i.e. their new submission deadline).

7.24   For a first extension, PGRs are liable for an extension fee (see: https://www.sussex.ac.uk/study/fees-funding/tuition-fees).

7.25   Where an application for extension is not approved, the PGR will be required to submit by the end of their maximum period of registration.

7.26   Where a PGR fails to submit by the end of their maximum period of registration (or extended maximum period of registration, where an extension has been approved) they will be deemed to have failed the research degree.

Extensions on the basis of parental leave

7.27   Extensions approved on the basis of parental leave will not count towards the maximum periods stated above.

7.28   Student visa holders should consult the International Advice team for advice about how periods of parental leave may affect their immigration status.

7.29   PGRs in receipt of funding are encouraged to contact the PGR Scholarships team to discuss their parental leave prior to making an application and determine any potential impacts in relation to their funding terms and conditions.

7.30   In all cases, appropriate documentation should be submitted with the request (e.g. a MATB1 form in the case of maternity leave).

Changes to mode of registration

7.31   With reference to section 6 of this document, and within the parameters set out below, PGRs may request a change to their mode of registration from full-time to part-time (or *vice versa*). This may be due to a change in circumstances, for example for personal or employment reasons. If a medical or health condition arises, it may be more appropriate in some instances to take an intermission (see above), unless the health issue indicates that a different mode of registration is more appropriate.

7.32   Changes between full-time and part-time registration (or *vice versa*) will normally only be considered once. Changes will only be considered prior to the final six months of the maximum period of registration.

7.33   Any changes between full- and part-time registration will result in the maximum date of registration being re-calculated *pro rata*.

7.34   PGRs subject to UKVI requirements should note that changes to mode of registration may not be permitted, and they should consult the UKVI Compliance team before requesting any changes to their registration who may, as necessary, refer them on to the International Advice team.

7.35   PGRs in receipt of funding are encouraged to contact the PGR Scholarships team to discuss a potential change to their mode of registration prior to making an application and determine any potential impacts on their funding and/or stipend payments.

7.36   Applications to change mode of registration will be considered by the relevant ADRI, or nominee(s), and, if approved, will commence from the start of the beginning of the next calendar month.

7.37   Student Data and Records must be notified by the Faculty/School of the decision to change mode of registration. On notification from the Faculty/School, Student Data and Records will process the change and formally notify the PGR of their revised maximum date of registration (i.e. their new submission deadline).

Changes to mode of attendance

7.38   With reference to section 6 of this document, PGRs may request a change to their mode of attendance from distance learning to on-campus (where available; or *vice versa*).

Transfer of research degree

7.39   A PGR may request a transfer to a different research degree at Sussex, where available, and provided that the transfer takes place before the giving of notice of intention to submit and subject to the particular restrictions noted below. A coherent and realistic plan for the completion and submission of the thesis within the required period of registration must be submitted as part of the approval process.

7.40   PGRs subject to UKVI requirements should consult the UKVI Compliance team before making any changes to their registration. Some changes will require a PGR to make a new visa application before the course change, and, in some cases, this may require the PGR to leave the country and apply for a new visa from overseas. Where the programme of study is subject to ATAS requirements, the PGR may also need to apply for a new Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) certificate. If necessary, the UKVI Compliance team will refer the PGR to the International Advice team for further guidance.

7.41   Where a PGR wishes to transfer to a different research degree at the same level as their original registration (i.e. from one PhD to another), the decision will lie with the ADRI, or nominee(s), in the relevant Faculty/School(s), with input from the relevant academic colleagues.

7.42   Where a PGR wishes to transfer from an MPhil to a PhD (whether in the same discipline or including a change in discipline), the decision will normally be considered as part of a Formal Progression Review. In any case, the decision will lie with the ADRI, or nominee(s), in the relevant Faculty/School(s), with input from the relevant academic colleagues. In such cases, the PGR will receive the maximum period of registration for the relevant PhD, less the time elapsed on the MPhil from which they have transferred.

7.43   Where a PGR opts to transfer from a PhD to an MPhil (whether in the same discipline or including a change in discipline):

- if they have not yet exceeded the maximum period of registration for the MPhil, their new registration end date (and thus submission deadline) will be calculated as per the maximum period for the MPhil, less the time registered on the PhD;
- if they have already exceeded the maximum period of registration for the MPhil, six months will be added to the date of transfer for a full-time PGR, or twelve months for a part-time PGR, to give them time to reframe their research and submit for the lower award;
- where the PGR holds Student visa sponsorship, it is essential that they seek advice from the International Advice team regarding possible implications.

7.44   In all cases, Student Data and Records must be notified by the Faculty/School of the decision to transfer research degree. On notification from the Faculty/School, Student Data and Records will process the transfer and notify the PGR of the update to their registration. If relevant, the PGR will be formally advised of their revised maximum date of registration (i.e. their new submission deadline).

Transferring into or out of the University of Sussex

7.45   In exceptional cases, a PGR may wish to transfer into or out of the University of Sussex. This is most likely to be the case when the PGR's main supervisor is transferring from one institution to another and the PGR wishes to move with them.

Transfers in

7.46   If a PGR wishes to transfer from another university to Sussex, they must apply through the normal admissions process (see section 3). Transfers will not be considered where the PGR has given notice of their intention to submit at their current institution and/or has already submitted their thesis for examination (whether or not they have received an outcome).

7.47   Over and above the admissions requirements, practical considerations such as funding or sponsorship for a visa may affect the feasibility of a transfer. Prior to making an offer, Faculties/Schools are advised to seek support from the PGR Scholarships team where a transfer in would involve a transfer of funding, or the International Advice team where the applicant may require advice relevant to their Student visa.

7.48   The application will be considered by the Faculty/School for exceptional entry and the research to date, where applicable, should be subject to an ethical review in accordance with the University's Code of Practice for Research. In making its admissions decision, the Faculty/School may reasonably request evidence of satisfactory progress against the progression requirements of the original institution.

7.49   The Faculty/School should ensure that the PGR is clear about the basis on which they are being accepted, including the length of registration, any variation to standard progress and review arrangements (see below), and any accreditation of prior learning to recognise courses and modules already undertaken, etc. It may be appropriate to include such criteria in the offer letter.

7.50   The total registration for the relevant research degree (or equivalent, where degree names do not align) across both the original institution and Sussex will not normally exceed the maximum period of registration as stated in this document. Requests for exceptions to be made (i.e. for a PGR to be admitted for a period of time which would result in their total period of registration exceeding Sussex's maximum period of registration) should be made by the relevant ADRI, or nominee(s), to

the Chair of the PGRSC, as per exceptional extensions (see above).

7.51   If a PGR transfers to Sussex following less than one year's registration (or part-time equivalent) on the equivalent research degree at their previous institution they must undertake Sussex's first Formal Progression Review no later than 12 months after their original registration commenced (i.e. calculating from their start date at their previous institution, notwithstanding any periods of intermission).

7.52   If a PGR transfers to a PhD at Sussex following less than two years' registration (or part-time equivalent) on an equivalent degree at their previous institution, they must undertake Sussex's second Formal Progression Review no later than 24 months after their original registration commenced (calculated as above). This is to ensure that any issues with PGR progress are picked up in good time; Faculties/Schools may consider a request for an extension to the progression review deadline in accordance with section 9 of this document.

Transfers out

7.53   If a PGR wishes to transfer from Sussex to another university, this will be dependent on the decision of the other institution to accept the PGR. Permission may also have to be gained from the PGR's funder (where relevant). A copy of the data produced by the PGR must be deposited with the University before departure (see the University's [Research Data Management Policy](#)).

Withdrawals

7.54   PGRs wishing to permanently withdraw should be encouraged to discuss their options with their supervisor or another member of staff; intermission or changing mode of registration and/or attendance may be more appropriate. The PGR should also be referred to Student Advice and Guidance, based in the Student Centre, for advice and support before making a decision.

7.55   Notification of withdrawal should be made on the appropriate form and submitted to Student Data and Records.

7.56   For PGRs on a Student visa, a permanent withdrawal will lead to the withdrawal of Student visa sponsorship. The University is required to report the withdrawal of sponsorship to UKVI within 10 days, after which the PGR is required to leave the UK.

7.57   PGRs living in the UK under any other type of visa should seek input from the UKVI Compliance team to determine the impact of the withdrawal on their status.

8.   Working hours and holidays

Working hours, employment and voluntary work

8.1   Supervisors and PGRs should ensure that any time spent on paid employment and/or voluntary work does not jeopardise the on-time submission of the thesis, or compromise wellbeing. Subject to any conditions imposed by the PGR's funder, any Student visa conditions, and the approval of their supervisor, PGRs registered full-time may undertake a maximum of twenty hours of paid employment and/or voluntary work per week (excluding periods of annual leave). This includes teaching and demonstrating and the associated preparation and marking (whether in employment at Sussex or elsewhere; PGRs engaged as Doctoral Tutors at Sussex should refer to the *Doctoral Tutor Collective Agreement*). It also includes 'on-call' hours where a PGR is not actively engaged in

work but where they have to be in a particular place.

8.2   For certain categories of paid employment or voluntary work closely related to the research project, exceptions to the working hours maximum may be made by the PGRSC (at the programme level) or the Faculty PGRC (for individual PGRs) on the recommendation of the Faculty PGRC or main supervisor, respectively.

8.3   Exceptions are not possible for international PGRs on Student visas where they have a maximum of 20 hours per week, during term, permitted under the terms of their sponsorship. The rights of Student visa sponsored PGRs to engage in paid work are dictated by the conditions of the Student visa, which supersede the information in this document.

Holidays

8.4   The University recognises the importance of time off as a key feature of a healthy work/life balance. PGRs are strongly encouraged to plan ahead, and to use their entitlement of annual leave, which is 40 working days (including public holidays and minimum service days), per academic year, pro-rated for part-time PGRs.

8.5   PGRs are responsible for requesting and recording their annual leave in line with their Faculty'/School's procedure. Faculties/Schools are strongly encouraged to have a system in place for the approval and tracking of PGRs' annual leave that enables oversight of the take up of annual leave and to ensure that requests for leave are not turned down without good reason.

8.6   For Student visa holder PGRs, requests for annual leave must be shared by the Faculty/School with the UKVI Compliance team and, prior to taking the requested annual leave, the PGR must have received confirmation that the leave has been authorised by the UKVI Compliance team. If the period of annual leave is less than one month, allowing the PGR to still maintain their minimum monthly attendance and engagement requirement, then no further action is required. If the period of annual leave exceeds one month, then they are required to maintain the monthly contact point even though they are approved annual leave.

9.   Progress and review arrangements

9.1   Regular review of a PGR's progress is essential to maximise the likelihood of the PGR completing the research project successfully within an appropriate timescale, and to ensure that if progress is unsatisfactory that they are given the support they need to make improvements. Formal supervisory meetings are a key part of this regular review process. In addition, PGRs (with the exception of those undertaking a PhD by Published Works; see Appendix 2) are subject to Formal Progression Reviews (see below). Additional progression points may be introduced when proposed by a Faculty/School and approved by the PGRSC.

9.2   Faculties/Schools are encouraged to specify milestones against which PGRs can monitor their progress (which may or may not be assessed as part of Formal Progression Reviews). This could include expectations regarding skills training (e.g. the completion of certain courses/modules by a particular point), and expectations regarding the dissemination of information (for example, in some disciplines, a typical PGR might present a poster at an internal conference in year 1, present an internal seminar on their work in year 2, and/or present their work at an external conference by the time of thesis submission).

Formal Progression Reviews

Purpose and overview of Formal Progression Reviews

9.3   A PGR is admitted to a research degree on the basis of an assessment of their potential at the admissions stage. Remaining on the level of study for which the PGR has been admitted is conditional on the PGR making satisfactory progress with respect to their research project and the other elements of their programme. The purpose of Formal Progression Reviews, therefore, is to ensure that PGRs are making satisfactory progress, to give PGRs a clear sense of the progress they are making, to provide reassurance to those who are performing to or beyond expectations, and to provide a means by which those who are underperforming can be identified in a timely manner and given the advice and support they need to address the situation.

9.4   Formal Progression Reviews take place on an annual basis for full-time PGRs and on a biennial basis for part-time PGRs. This means that a PGR on a four-year PhD programme (or part-time equivalent) will have three formal reviews of progress.

9.5   In a Formal Progression Review, a PGR is assessed against the relevant University progression criteria by one or more independent Assessors (see below). PGRs are permitted a maximum of two opportunities to meet the relevant University progression criteria at each Formal Progression Review (see below).

9.6   If a PGR has not met the relevant University progression criteria after two attempts, they will be deemed to have failed the progression point and they will be transferred to an alternative programme or withdrawn from their research degree (see below).

9.7   Progression decisions are approved by the Faculty's/School's ADRI, or nominee(s), and must be reported to Student Data and Records for the PGR's central student record.

9.8   Whilst the framework for Formal Progression Reviews is set out by the University below, many of the details (including the exact timing, the evidence requested, and the composition and operation of meetings) are determined by Faculties/Schools within the parameters set by the University.

Timing of Formal Progression Reviews

9.9   Formal Progression Reviews should take place annually for full-time PGRs (between months 9-12) and biennially for part-time PGRs (between months 9-12 of the second year of each two-year period). The end of each annual period (or biennial period for part-time PGRs) is the deadline for completion of the Formal Progression Review, notwithstanding any second attempt (see below).

9.10   The timing of Formal Progression Reviews should take into account the individual PGR's start date and any intermission/authorised absence they may have taken and/or any change in mode of registration.

9.11   PGRs should not be subject to additional Formal Progression Reviews. Exceptionally, and where there are concerns about a PGR, it is possible to convene a Formal Progression Review outside the above stated timings. This may be at the request of the PGR, their supervisor(s), or the ADRI or nominee(s). The University criteria for the relevant stage apply, and Assessors should factor in what it may be reasonable for a PGR to have achieved where a Formal Progression Review is held early.

The timing of any subsequent reviews (where relevant) should resume as per the above stated schedule.

9.12   In the case of part-time PGRs, and taking into account the long period between Formal Progression Reviews (i.e. those which lead to a decision about the continued registration of the PGR), Faculties/Schools may opt to require part-time PGRs to undertake Interim Progression Reviews in those years in which a Formal Progression Review is not required. Where utilised, Interim Progression Reviews must be applied consistently across PGRs and cannot lead to a decision about the continued registration of a PGR. Where Faculties/Schools choose to require Interim Progression Reviews for part-time PGRs, this must be stated clearly in the Faculty/School PGR handbook or equivalent resource, and it should be made clear to PGRs in preparation for each meeting whether they are going to be subject to a Formal or an Interim Progression Review.

Formal Progression Review Meetings

9.13   In addition to the Faculty's/School's requirements for the submission of evidence to inform a review of PGRs' progress (see below), PGRs are normally required to attend a Formal Progression Review Meeting in person.

9.14   The Formal Progression Review Meeting should be conducted by at least one senior academic member of the same or a cognate department who has experience of successful PGR supervision in the broad disciplinary area within which the PGR is based (the 'Assessor'). The Assessor(s) must be independent of the supervisory team for the relevant PGR.

9.15   The Assessor(s) primary role is to determine, on the basis of the evidence from the PGR and the supervisor's report, if the PGR meets the relevant University criteria for progression (see below). Assessor(s) are not required to make detailed judgements about a PGR's research project, nor to direct the PGR's future work, although they may choose to provide advice and insights.

9.16   At the request of the PGR, and with the agreement of the ADRI, or nominee(s),, a supervisor may attend a Formal Progression Review Meeting as a silent observer.

9.17   During the course of the meeting, PGRs should be given an opportunity to raise any concerns or problems or any areas where they might be better supported by the department or Faculty/School. Where a PGR is registered on an MPhil, they may request to be considered for transfer to a PhD (see below).

9.18   If a PGR is unable to attend their Formal Progression Review Meeting due to illness or other serious extenuating circumstances, they should inform the Assessor(s) as soon as possible in order that an alternative date may be arranged. If the postponement results in the Formal Progression Review Meeting falling outside the timeframes stated below, permission will need to be obtained from the ADRI, or nominee(s) (see below).

9.19   If a PGR fails to engage with the preparation for the Formal Progression Review Meeting, and/or fails to attend without good reason, the Panel has the right to proceed with the review and make a recommendation on the basis of the progression review submission alone (see below).

Evidence considered by the Assessor(s)

9.20   In addition to the research plan (see section 5) and Training Needs Analysis (see section 10), the

Faculty/School will define the academic work that is required to be produced/submitted as part of the Formal Progression Review, and the format in which the work should be presented. The Faculty/School will also determine whether its Formal Progression Review Meetings include an academic defence of the subject matter of the thesis or 'mini viva'. The Faculty's/School's requirements should be clearly stated in its PGR handbook or equivalent resource and consistently applied across all PGRs.

9.21   In addition to the academic work requirements, the PGR and their main supervisor must also complete and submit separate and confidential Progression Review Reports.

9.22   The Faculty/School should clearly indicate the deadline for the submission of materials for consideration by the Assessor(s) prior to the Formal Progression Review Meeting.

Progression criteria

9.23   The University's progression criteria for PhD and MPhil programmes set out the threshold requirements for progression to the next stage. They should be understood by reference to what a conscientious PGR might reasonably expect to have achieved in the time available.

9.24   For progression into year 2 of a full-time research degree (or equivalent stage of a part-time PGR), a PGR must demonstrate that they:

- can articulate the direction their research is taking and the research questions it addresses;
- have planned in a realistic fashion the second year (or part-time equivalent) of their research, indicating any risks and how these will be mitigated;
- have sufficient acquaintance with the relevant field of knowledge to place their research into context;
- have sufficient proficiency in the relevant research methods, techniques and theoretical approaches to move their research to the next stage;
- have undertaken all training required to date;
- have considered ethical issues (including data management and authorship) where applicable and have in place an appropriate data management plan.

9.25   For progression into year 3 of a full-time PhD (or equivalent stage of a part-time PhD programme), a PGR must demonstrate that they:

- can articulate the direction their research is taking and the research questions it addresses and how this will lead to a substantial original contribution to knowledge or understanding;
- have planned in a realistic fashion the third year (or part-time equivalent) of their research, based on the expectation that the project will be completed and the thesis submitted within the maximum period of registration, indicating any risks and how these will be mitigated;
- have the ability to write up their research in an appropriate academic format for it to be critically assessed by peer reviewers and examiners;
- have begun to acquire the wider background knowledge of their research field required for the degree of PhD;
- can apply the relevant research methods, techniques and theoretical approaches required to make an original contribution to knowledge;
- have undertaken all training required to date;
- have considered ethical issues (including data management and authorship) where applicable and have in place an appropriate data management plan.

9.26   For progression into year 4 of a full-time PhD (where relevant; or equivalent stage of a part-time PhD programme), a PGR must demonstrate that they:

- have planned in a realistic fashion the final year (or part-time equivalent) of their research, based on the expectation that the project will be completed and the thesis submitted on time, indicating any risks and how these will be mitigated;
- have started to write up their research (or able to demonstrate that they have started to plan to write up their research) in an appropriate academic format for it to be critically assessed by peer reviewers and examiners;
- have acquired much of the wider background knowledge of their research field required for the degree of PhD;
- can apply the relevant research methods, techniques and theoretical approaches required to make an original contribution to knowledge or understanding;
- have undertaken all required training to date;
- have considered ethical issues (including data management and authorship) where applicable and have in place an appropriate data management plan.

Progression Decisions

9.27   The Assessor(s) will consider the evidence from the PGR alongside the supervisor's report, and the academic work required by the Faculty/School, at a Formal Progression Review Meeting. Based on these elements the Assessor(s) will make a decision as to whether the PGR has met the relevant University progression criteria and make a recommendation regarding their progression.

Formal Progression Review outcomes at the first attempt

9.28   Following the first Progression Review meeting, the below recommendations are available to the Assessor(s):

If the Assessor(s) agree(s) that the progression criteria for the relevant stage have been **satisfied** they may recommend:

(i)   That the PGR progresses on to their next stage of study; *OR*

(ii)   In the case of PGRs registered on an MPhil degree, that the PGR may progress on to the next stage at the PhD level ('upgraded').

If the Assessor(s) agree(s) that the progression criteria for the relevant stage **have not yet been satisfied** they must recommend:

(iii)   That the PGR be given a second opportunity to meet the criteria within three months of the date of the formal notification of the outcome (see below).

Making a recommendation for a second attempt

9.29   If, at a PGR's first attempt, the Assessor(s) decides that a PGR has *not yet* met the relevant University progression criteria (including on the grounds of non-submission of evidence and/or non-attendance at a progression review meeting), they must recommend a second attempt at meeting the relevant University progression criteria.

9.30   The Assessor(s) will prepare a report for the ADRI, or nominee(s), to approve on behalf of the Faculty PGRC. The report must be submitted within two weeks of the Formal Progression Review Meeting and should include details on the relevant PGR's academic progress, highlighting aspects that are not satisfactory, and including the recommendation for a second attempt at meeting the criteria. The ADRI, or nominee(s), must consider the recommendation within one week of receipt of the report and, where the outcome is approved, the ADRI, or nominee(s), must notify Student Data and Records as soon as possible.

9.31   Where a second attempt is recommended, Student Data and Records will formally notify the PGR of the outcome within one week of receiving the notification from the ADRI, or nominee(s). The PGR retains the right of appeal against a failure to progress, as outlined in the Academic Appeals Regulations, and will be advised of their right to appeal when formally notified of the outcome.

9.32   The ADRI, or nominee(s), must ensure that the PGR is given appropriate written feedback in order to address the elements of their progress considered unsatisfactory. This may take the form of sharing the Assessor(s) report, whether wholly or in part.

Second attempt at meeting the criteria

9.33   The second Formal Progression Review Meeting runs as per a first attempt.

9.34   Following a second Formal Progression Review Meeting, the below recommendations are available to the Assessor(s):

If the Assessor(s) agree(s) that the progression criteria for the relevant stage have been **satisfied** they may recommend:

(i)   That the PGR progresses on to their next stage of study; *OR*

(ii)   In the case of PGRs registered on an MPhil degree, that the PGR may progress on to the next stage at the PhD level ('upgraded').

If the Assessor(s) agree(s) that the progression criteria for the relevant stage **have not been satisfied** the PGR will be deemed to have failed the progression point and they may recommend:

(iii)   In the case of PGRs registered on an PhD, only, that the PGR is transferred to MPhil ('downgraded'); *OR*

(iv)   That the PGR be withdrawn from the research degree.

9.35   If a PGR progresses at the second attempt this does not alter the timing of the next Formal Progression Review (if applicable), nor change the period of registration (and, therefore, nor the deadline for submission of the thesis).

9.36   Transfer to an alternative research degree is subject to the approval of a revised maximum period of registration (e.g. in the case of a transfer from a PhD to MPhil: see section 7), if required.

9.37   Where the Assessor(s) recommend(s) a downgrade or withdrawal, they should prepare a report for the ADRI, or nominee(s), to approve on behalf of the Faculty PGRC. The report must be submitted

within two weeks of the second Formal Progression Review Meeting and should include details on the relevant PGR's academic progress, highlighting aspects that are not satisfactory, and including the recommendation for downgrade or withdrawal. The ADRI, or nominee(s), must consider the recommendation within one week of receipt of the report and, where the outcome is approved, the ADRI, or nominee(s), must notify Student Data and Records as soon as possible.

9.38   The PGR will receive formal notification of the outcome from Student Data and Records within one week of receiving the notification from the ADRI, or nominee(s). They retain the right of appeal against a failure to progress, as outlined in the [Academic Appeals Regulations](#), and will be advised of their right to appeal when formally notified of the outcome.

Extensions to progression deadlines

9.39   Where the timings stated above may be exceeded (e.g. because of illness of the PGR, or of the Assessor(s)), permission to extend the deadline for progression must be sought from the ADRI, or nominee(s). Any extension will normally be limited to two months for full-time PGRs, or four months for part-time PGRs.

9.40   Any extension to the deadline for a Formal Progression Review does not alter the timing of the next Formal Progression Review (if applicable), nor change the period of registration (and, therefore, nor the deadline for submission of the thesis).

Oversight of Formal Progression Review Decisions

9.41   Faculties/Schools should maintain oversight of the Formal Progression Review process, either by individual action of the ADRI, or nominee(s), or by assembling a Faculty/School Progression Review Panel to meet annually (see 9.42-9.44). In either case the below factors should be considered and where this function is fulfilled by the ADRI, or nominee(s), a report should be delivered annually to the Faculty PGRC:

(i)   Ensuring that the progression criteria are being applied consistently across the Faculty/School (e.g. by sampling outcomes across Assessor(s); the Panel/ADRI, or nominee(s), is not normally expected to overturn decisions, but rather to use any findings to inform the advice, guidance and/or training given to Assessors);

(ii)   Keep under review the Faculty-/School-level evidence and other requirements, to ensure they remain proportionate and appropriate for addressing the institutional criteria;

(iii)   And in the case of a Faculty/School Progression Review Panel: to provide input outside the annual meeting at the request of the ADRI, or nominee(s), where a recommendation for a second attempt, downgrade or withdrawal is considered borderline.

9.42   Where convened, the Faculty/School Progression Review Panel should include the ADRI, or nominee(s), plus at least two other senior academic colleagues. The composition of the Panel will be determined by the Faculty/School. Faculties/Schools may choose to utilise the existing Faculty PGRC mechanism and embed the annual Faculty/School Progression Review Panel meeting into its annual cycle of business, in which case the Panel should meet under closed business (i.e. not in the presence of any PGR reps). Alternatively, Faculties/Schools may wish to create a sub-group of their Faculty PGRC, or to take an alternative approach.

9.43   Any Faculty/School Progression Review Panel members who are involved in the supervision of a PGR whose progression is reviewed by the Panel should step out while the case is reviewed.

9.44   Membership of a Faculty/School Progression Review Panel does not prevent a member of faculty from subsequently acting as an internal examiner for any PGRs whose outcomes are reviewed by the Panel.

10.   Training and development

10.1   In line with the [Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers](#) and [UK Research and Innovation's Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training](#), PGRs are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the training made available to them to support their research, to enhance their employability and to assist their career progress after completion of their degree. In addition to Faculty-/School-based training, PGRs can access Researcher Development's [central programme of personal and professional skills training](#).

10.2   PGRs are entitled to a minimum of 10 days per year (pro-rated for part-time PGRs) to engage in activities and training to support their professional and career development. PGRs should inform their main supervisor of planned training in advance. Supervisors must respect this time and discuss and review the activities undertaken during formal supervisory meetings.

10.3   PGRs are required to complete all mandatory training as stipulated by the University and (where relevant) their Faculty/School. Mandatory training will be highlighted during central and local induction processes and in University communications. This includes (but is not limited to) the University's online training modules for PGRs in Research Ethics and Integrity, and Research Data Management; these modules should be completed by the time the PGR submits their research plan during their first year of registration or part-time equivalent (see section 5 for timings), and in all cases progression following the first Formal Progression Review will not be confirmed until the required training has been completed.

10.4   PGRs must complete a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) with their supervisor at the start of each year to identify areas for development and then target specific workshops and courses that focus on these areas, such as those offered via the SRS. The TNA should also be considered as part of a Formal Progression Review. Further information on completing a TNA is available on the [SRS webpages](#).

10.5   Where relevant, the main supervisor is responsible for ensuring that PGRs are aware of any training or development requirements imposed by a funder, and for ensuring that opportunities are available to satisfy any such requirements; PGRs are responsible for ensuring that these requirements are met.

10.6   In order to support their career planning and future applications, PGRs should keep a record on Sussex Direct of all the training and other enrichment activities they undertake, whether provided centrally, by their Faculty/School or externally e.g. presentations, conferences, teaching, demonstrating, internships, etc. The TNA also provides a useful tool for logging and reflecting on the training undertaken.

10.7   PGRs are encouraged to take advantage of the careers advice and guidance available to them at Sussex vis the [Student Hub](#), and to access Vitae's extensive [careers resources](#).

Faculty/School training requirements, including taught modules

10.8   Any research degree-specific training requirements which constitute Formal Progression Review and/or award requirements (noting 10.17) should be considered when the programme is being designed and included in the proposal for a new research degree which will be considered by the PGRSC. Training requirements might include auditing or passing particular courses or credit-bearing modules, and/or completing a certain number of hours/days of training per annum, and should take into account the expectations of the funder, where applicable.

10.9   The introduction of, or significant changes to, the formal training requirements for an existing research degree must be submitted to the PGRSC for consideration and approval.

10.10   Where there is a taught element in a new research degree proposal, or in a change to an existing research degree, approval from the Portfolio Approval Sub-Committee (PASC) may be required prior to PGRSC approval.

10.11   In all cases, Faculty-/School-level training requirements should be: directly relevant to the research degree in question; achievable within the time-frame available without a negative impact on a PGR's research and progress; and equitably applied.

10.12   While the training needs of specific PGRs will be assessed and tailored via the completion of a TNA (see above), and over and above the training required under this document or for the specific research degree, additional requirements which constitute Formal Progression Review requirements (e.g. the successful completion of a module to progress) should not be imposed on an individual PGR.

10.13   Faculty/School training requirements must be explained to PGRs at Faculty/School induction and specified in the Faculty's/School's PGR handbook or equivalent resource.

   Taught modules

10.14   Where PGRs are required to pass taught modules (whether or not for credit) for Formal Progression Review or for final award, these will normally be at Masters FHEQ level 7, or PhD FHEQ level 8. The standard taught Progression and Award regulations apply to these modules.

10.15   Where PGRs are required to undertake a module for credit, they should be registered for the module in the University student records system and will be eligible for an academic transcript.

10.16   All modules taken for credit by PGRs will be subject to the University's standard quality assurance processes, including marking moderation and feedback, and External Examiner oversight. Module marks are assured by the relevant Faculty/School Module Assessment Board (MAB). PGRs will not be considered by a Faculty/School Progression and Award Board (PAB) as they are not registered on a taught award. Failure of modules taken for credit will lead to an automatic resit scheduled in the resit assessment period (A3). A resit for a failed module will be uncapped in proportion with accepted Exceptional Circumstances (EC), see the Exceptional Circumstances Policy. Exams and Assessment will identify all PGRs with a module failure (including those who have an accepted EC claim) after the summer PABs, contact them to offer resits/sits and update their records accordingly. PGRs may use the EC process to apply for excused non-submission, excused late submission or impairment, but a sit will only be offered where the module has been failed.

Failure to meet Faculty/School training requirements

10.17   Failure to meet Faculty/School training requirements (including those relating to credit-bearing modules) can be used to inform Formal Progression Review decisions. However, failure to meet Faculty/School training requirements should not, on its own, be grounds for a PGR to be withdrawn from their research degree or to fail a Formal Progression Review unless this option is explicitly approved for a particular research degree by the PGRSC.

11.   Research integrity and ethics

11.1   In line with the UUK Concordat to support research integrity, PGRs and their supervisors are expected to maintain the highest standards of research conduct and to act in accordance with the University's research integrity framework ([Code of Practice for Research](#) and [Research Governance Standard Operating Procedures](#)).

Ethical approval for research

11.2   Any ethical issues relating to a PGR's research must be identified at the earliest opportunity (ideally before admission, and by no later than the approval of the research plan; see section 5) by the main supervisor and the PGR, with reference to the University's [Code of Practice for Research](#), and seeking advice where necessary from the Faculty's/School's Senior Research Ethics and Integrity Officer.

11.3   All PGRs whose research involves living subjects will require ethical approval. Depending on the focus and methodology, other research may also require ethical approval. The checklist *[Do I need ethics approval for my research?](#)* will help to determine whether ethical review is needed.

11.4   Where formal ethical approval from an internal ethics committee (and, where necessary, an external body) is needed, the main supervisor and the PGR will be jointly responsible for securing this in accordance with the [Code of Practice for Research](#) *before* the research commences.

11.5   All PGRs requiring ethics approval must apply via the online ethics review system. Depending on the nature of the research, approval may be required from the Research Ethics and Integrity Sub-Committee. Where research falls into a specialist category, then an application will need to be made to the committee which covers that area of research.

11.6   Confirmation of ethical approval (where needed) is required for Formal Progression Reviews and at the point of thesis submission.

11.7   Where research misconduct is identified or suspected, it will be investigated under the [Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research](#).

Training for research integrity and ethics

11.8   The University (via Research Ethics, Integrity & Governance) and Faculties/Schools will provide PGRs with guidance on good research practice, with reference to the University's research integrity framework, and the avoidance of research misconduct.

11.9   PGRs are required to complete an online module on Research Ethics and Integrity (see clause 10.3

of this document).

11.10   As per the University's [Research Data Management Policy](#), PGRs are expected to have an appropriate data management plan. In line with this document (see section 9), a data management plan should be in place by the first Formal Progression Review. The data management plan should be updated as required and checked at subsequent Formal Progression Reviews (where applicable).

The use of generative AI by PGRs

11.11   The University's position regarding the use of generative AI (genAI) tools by PGRs, and the intersection with research integrity and other considerations, is laid out in its Statement on the Use of Generative AI by Postgraduate Researchers (see Appendix 6). PGRs and their supervisors should familiarise themselves with this information.

Academic misconduct

11.12   Where a PGR takes a taught module for credit, the [Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures](#) for taught provision will apply. All cases of academic misconduct in module assessment must be seriously considered by the Faculty/School owning the module and appropriate penalties applied, as determined by the Academic Misconduct Panel in accordance with the policy and procedure. Module assessment includes any work undertaken by a PGR for which marks contributing to a module are awarded, including those modules which are marked pass/fail.

11.13   Where academic misconduct is suspected in any element of a PGR's work produced for their research degree, the [Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research](#) will apply.

12.   Examination

12.1   Examination requirements for research degrees are overseen by the RDPAB on behalf of the PGRSC and *ad hoc* exceptions to these requirements must be approved by the RDPAB. Programme-wide exceptions (e.g. as part of a collaboration arrangement with an international partner) must be approved by the PGRSC during consideration of the collaboration agreement.

Nature of the thesis

12.2   Assessment for a research degree award will normally be on the basis of a thesis, but with the approval of PGRSC the assessment for a specified research degree (e.g. degrees by creative practice; note 12.7) may also be on the basis of additional materials arising from research.

12.3   Assessment will be wholly on the basis of the thesis (or other materials prescribed for the research degree concerned), and of the viva.

12.4   Neither the thesis nor any accompanying materials may include work which was submitted for an award at the same level (whether at Sussex or elsewhere, and whether successful or unsuccessful), unless stipulated in the terms of a collaborative research degree arrangement approved by the University (i.e. in the case of a double award; see section 16 and Appendix 5). In the case of PGRs registered for a PhD who wish to reference material produced during their Master's degree (i.e. because their PhD project is a continuation/expansion of a project first started during their

Masters), they may do this provided such instances are clearly cited.

12.5   Apart from any quotations, the thesis (main body of the text) must be written in English. If there are exceptional grounds for a thesis to be submitted in a language other than English this must be approved by RDPAB on the request of the Faculty PGRC. Permission should normally be sought within the first year of registration for full-time PGRs, and within the first two years for part-time PGRs.

12.6   If a PGR wishes to deviate from the institutional requirements for the thesis (or other materials prescribed for the research degree concerned) this must be approved by the RDPAB on the request of the relevant Faculty PGRC, prior to the notification of intention to submit (see below).

12.7   The length of a thesis (or the exact nature and extent of other materials prescribed for the research degree concerned) shall be determined by the Faculty PGRC, taking into account the type and length of the research degree (including those offered only as an exit award) and disciplinary norms, and shall be specified in the Faculty's/School's PGRs handbook or equivalent resource.

12.8   Where a research degree by creative practice has been approved, the Faculty/School must require that any creative products (musical compositions, performances, films, novels, etc) are accompanied by a written element which puts the creative practice into its research context. The length and expectations for this written element shall be determined by the Faculty PGRC and specified in the Faculty's/School's PGR handbook.

12.9   If a PGR wishes to deviate from the approved Faculty/School requirements for the thesis (or other materials prescribed for the research degree concerned) this must be approved by the Faculty PGRC prior to the notification of intention to submit (see below).

12.10   PGRs are required to prepare and to submit for examination their thesis as specified in the University's requirements. Without prejudice to section 13 of this document, material submitted for examination (or, following resubmission for re-examination) remains the physical property of the University. Material submitted for a research degree award by creative practice will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

12.11   PGRs wanting to engage the services of a proof reader or editor in the preparation of their thesis should consult and adhere to the University's Proofreading Policy.

Papers-Style theses

12.12   A Faculty PGRC may permit PGRs within the Faculty/School to submit theses comprising papers in refereed journals (or similar). This type of thesis is sometimes called a 'papers-style' thesis or MPhil/PhD 'by papers' and requires that the greater proportion of the work to be submitted was carried out during registration for the relevant research degree and under supervision; this should not be confused with the PhD by Published Works (see Appendix 2).

12.13   The introduction to the thesis should explain how the body of work represents a significant contribution to knowledge, and include a short description of each chapter or paper and its contribution to the overall body of work. A final chapter should also be included to bring the papers and chapters together into a conclusion.

12.14   Where co-authored works are submitted, PGRs are required to include a declaration confirming

their contribution to each paper.

Intention to submit

12.15   PGRs are required to give a minimum two months' notice of their intention to submit their thesis for examination by completing and submitting the Intention to Submit form. Failure to give full notice of intention to submit will delay the examination of the thesis; at least two months' notice is required to identify and formally appoint examiners.

12.16   When a PGR discusses with their supervisor(s) the submission of the thesis, any endorsement by the supervisor(s) of the intention to submit (and therefore of the thesis itself) in no way prejudges the outcome of the subsequent assessment, which is entirely a matter for the examiners. The supervisor(s) may discuss with their PGR the purpose and possible nature of the oral examination, while making it clear that they are unable to predict how the examination will be conducted, or its outcome.

12.17   Once submitted, a PGR may not resubmit their thesis prior to the examination process.

Examiner appointment

12.18   Examiners are appointed by the RDPAB, acting on behalf of Senate (via the PGRSC). RDPAB will consider the nomination of examiners by the ADRI, or nominee(s),, who will in turn have considered the recommendation of the main supervisor.

12.19   Unless a PGR is or has been a member of academic staff (see below), at least one internal and one external examiner will be appointed to examine a PGR. Additional examiners may be appointed where appropriate, for example where the topic of the thesis is such that it cannot be adequately covered by a single internal or external examiner. Where three examiners are appointed, normally two will be external.

12.20   Where a PGR is a member of academic staff (grade 7 or above), or has been at any point during their registration for the degree under examination, two external examiners and an independent chair should be appointed (see below).

12.21   No examiner may have played a role in the supervision of the PGR under examination.

12.22   Examiners should possess a research degree or equivalent experience, have appropriate levels of expertise in the relevant research area, and be able to demonstrate that they are research active. (See below for additional role-specific requirements, i.e. internal examiners.)

12.23   Examiners should be independent, impartial and not have any known conflict of interest which might impinge on their role as examiner. Potential conflicts of interest must be considered and declared at the point of nomination, with reference to the information for examiners and the University's Personal Relationships Policy.

12.24   At least one of the examiners should have experience in research degree examination. If the proposed internal examiner has not conducted a research degree examination at the University of Sussex, they should be briefed on the conduct of the viva and the University's examination procedures by a member of faculty experienced in research examination at Sussex, and who has not played a role in supervising the PGR.

Internal examiners

12.25   An internal examiner will normally be a member of the University's Education and Research staff, other than the PGR's supervisor(s). RDPAB has the authority to decide who qualifies as an internal examiner.

12.26   Where no independent chair is appointed, the internal examiner takes on the chairing responsibilities (see below).

External examiners

12.27   An external examiner will normally be a member of the academic staff of another higher education institution in the United Kingdom, or be of comparable academic or professional standing.

12.28   The same external examiner may be appointed to examine no more than two PGR candidates in the same Faculty/School in any 12-month period, and no more than four PGR candidates in the same Faculty/School in any 36-month period.

12.29   Former members of staff or former students of the University should not be invited to become external examiners until at least five years after their staff appointment has ceased, or the award of their degree, respectively.

12.30   An external examiner for a taught degree programme may be nominated for appointment as an external examiner for a PGR.

Independent Chairs

12.31   An independent chair must be appointed where the examiners are all external (see above). Other reasons for appointing an independent chair may be to account for the relative experience of the examination team, or in response to an Assessment of Needs where the PGR's circumstances indicate that they may require reasonable adjustments during the viva; this list is not exhaustive. The University reserves the right to require an independent chair when none is nominated by the Faculty/School (e.g. where an academic appeal is upheld and a re-examination takes place with the same examiners).

12.32   The role of an independent chair is to ensure that the viva is conducted in line with the University's regulations and this document. Where reasonable adjustments are recommended following an Assessment of Needs, the independent chair must also ensure that the recommended adjustments are accommodated, where possible. Where an independent chair is not appointed, these responsibilities fall to the internal examiner.

12.33   An independent chair will normally be a member of senior University of Sussex faculty with experience of internal and external examining at the same level as the examination they are to chair. They will normally come from the relevant Faculty/School, but they can be from any disciplinary background; they are not required to have expertise in the subject of the thesis. They must not have previously acted as a supervisor for the PGR.

12.34   Notwithstanding instances where the internal examiner chairs the viva, the independent chair must not participate in academic discussion during a viva, or any deliberation regarding the quality of the

PGR's work.

12.35　The independent chair is required to contribute a report on the conduct of the viva to the examiners' Joint Report (see below), and as such may make notes during the viva on what is covered, and any other aspects of the viva it may be pertinent to record for the awareness of the RDPAB. This is not required where the internal examiner chairs the viva.

Requests for confidentiality

12.36　Where a PGR is funded and there is commercially sensitive information within the thesis, funders can request a non-disclosure agreement. This would be between the examiners and the University. In such cases, the Examinations and Assessment team should be notified at the earliest opportunity so that advice can be given and an agreement arranged to be signed.

12.37　Exceptionally, and only with the approval of the RDPAB following a recommendation from the ADRI, or nominee(s), examiners may be asked to enter into a non-disclosure agreement for reasons other than commercial sensitivity, e.g. where the content of the thesis represents a risk to the PGR or participants in their research.

Unexaminable theses

12.38　In cases of a thesis being rendered unexaminable as a result of remote (i.e. third-party) printing errors or file corruption, the examiners should notify the Examinations and Assessment team as soon as possible, and no later than four weeks after receipt. The Examinations and Assessment team will contact the PGR to request an examinable version of the thesis originally submitted for examination, to be submitted within five working days; the examiners should not contact the PGR directly.

Requirement for a viva

12.39　PGRs are required to attend a viva on the subject of the thesis; the viva forms an important part of the examination for the award of the research degree. If the PGR fails to attend their viva without good reason, they have not fulfilled the requirements of the award, and have thus failed the degree.

12.40　If a PGR is unable to attend their viva due to illness or other serious extenuating circumstances, they should inform the internal examiner and the Examinations and Assessment team as soon as possible in order that an alternative date may be arranged. If the postponement results in the viva falling more than three months post-submission, permission will need to be sought from the RDPAB by the internal examiner.

12.41　Very exceptionally, the RDPAB may grant exemption from a viva for a PGR on the recommendation of the examiners where the thesis has met the requirements for the degree, but the PGR is permanently unable to present themselves for a viva for medical or compassionate reasons. The approval of the RDPAB for waiving the viva must be obtained before the examiners submit their Joint Report (see below). In such cases, any degree awarded will have the status of an aegrotat degree, meaning that it would not constitute a full PhD, and therefore would not confer the title of Doctor, or denote suitability to practise or eligibility for registration with a Professional Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB).

The purpose of the viva

12.42   The purpose of the viva is to allow the examiners the opportunity to explore and to satisfy themselves regarding the following points:

(i)   in the case of a PhD candidate, that the thesis represents a substantial original contribution to knowledge or understanding; or in the case of an MPhil candidate, that the thesis represents a recognisable original contribution to knowledge or understanding;

(ii)   in the case of a PhD candidate, that they are well-acquainted with the general field of knowledge to which their research relates; or in the case of an MPhil candidate, that they have a comprehensive knowledge of the relevant part or aspect of the field of study;

(iii)   that there is evidence of training in, and the application of, appropriate research methods;

(iv)   that the work submitted is the PGR's own (or, if done in collaboration, that the PGR's share in the research is adequate);

(v)   that the mode of presentation is satisfactory.

12.43   The viva also allows the PGR the opportunity to respond to any shortcomings identified by the examiners.

12.44   In accordance with UK norms, vivas at Sussex are 'closed'; only the PGR and examiners are present (with the addition, in some instances, of an independent chair, independent observer or the supervisor, noting 12.54).

12.45   Candidates are encouraged to access support in preparation for the viva. The principal source of support should be the main supervisor, though input from others involved in supervision is also encouraged. Faculties/Schools should ensure PGRs are offered support (e.g. participation at a suitable workshop, offer of a mock viva or reference to relevant written guidance materials). The central Researcher Development team also offers sessions on preparing for the viva.

Organising the viva

12.46   It is the responsibility of the internal examiner (or of the member of staff appointed as independent chair if no internal examiner is appointed; see above) to make arrangements for the viva.

12.47   The viva should be held within three months of the date of submission of the thesis. Permission to hold the viva beyond three months of submission must be obtained from the RDPAB.

12.48   The internal examiner should agree the date of the viva in consultation with both the external examiner(s) and the PGR. Once a date has been identified, the internal examiner should formally notify the PGR of the time and place of the viva in writing and copy in the Examinations and Assessment team. The examiners must not have any direct communication with the PGR prior to the viva, other than in relation to the viva arrangements.

12.49   The PGR and the examiners (and independent chair, where relevant) should all be present at the viva. 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. A 'remote viva' is where one or more of the parties cannot be present at the University of Sussex and requires approval by the RDPAB in advance; see Appendix 3.

12.50   In the event that one of the examiners is unable to attend the viva as planned, the PGR must be notified as soon as possible and the viva postponed. If this results in the viva being held beyond three months of the date of submission, permission to exceed the three months must be obtained from the RDPAB. Depending on the duration of any postponement, RDPAB may advise that an alternative examiner be nominated and appointed.

Examiners' independent reports

12.51   Before the viva, each examiner should submit an independent report within eight weeks of receipt of the thesis. The report should explain concisely the scope of the thesis, its merits and any shortcomings to be addressed in the viva. Examiners must not confer on the writing of the independent reports. Once all the independent reports have been received, the Examinations and Assessment team will share the independent reports with all examiners; the viva should take place within one month of the sharing of the reports.

During the viva

12.52   *[PLACE HOLDER: Policy on reasonable adjustments for assessment is under review at all levels at Sussex, following recent high-profile rulings at the sector level. Policy wording will be formulated following the outcome of that review.]*

12.53   In order to ensure that the viva is conducted fairly, the internal examiner should act as chair of the examination and shall ensure that it is conducted in accordance with this document. Where two external examiners are used, and there is no internal examiner, an independent chair should be appointed (see above).

12.54   At the request of the PGR, and with the consent of the examiners, the supervisor or another member of academic or professional support staff approved by the relevant ADRI, or nominee(s), may be present at the viva as a silent observer.

12.55   Care should be taken to make the PGR feel at ease at the viva. To this end, the appropriateness and layout of the examination room should be given careful thought and provision should be made for short breaks/refreshments, etc, as required, particularly for longer vivas.

12.56   PGRs should bring a copy of their thesis in the viva. This may be annotated and/or they may bring associated notes. However, PGRs should not bring any other additional materials to the examination without the prior agreement of the examiners (e.g. to allow a PGR to demonstrate a computer simulation). No new research should be presented at the viva.

Examination outcomes

Examination outcomes following the original submission

12.57   Following the viva, the below recommendations are available to the examiners:

If the examiners agree that the requirements for the relevant research degree have been *satisfied* they may recommend:

(i)   Unconditional Pass: That the degree should be awarded unconditionally. A very small number of minor typographical errors, which can be corrected immediately but do not

require checking by the examiners, are permitted; *OR*

(ii)   Pass with Minor Corrections: That the degree should be awarded subject to minor corrections to the thesis, to be completed within three months (for full-time PGRs) or six months (for part-time PGRs) of the PGR receiving the list of corrections, to the satisfaction of the internal (where the internal examiner is unavailable or in instances where all examiners are external, another of the examiners). The following are considered types of minor corrections: spelling/typing errors, textual errors, reordering of material, correction of citations, and correction of figures, tables and diagrams, and the addition of a small number of paragraphs for clarification or qualification); *OR*

(iii)   Pass with Major Corrections: That the degree should be awarded subject to major corrections to the thesis, to be completed within six months (for full-time PGRs) or 12 months (for part-time PGRs) of the PGR receiving the list of corrections, to the satisfaction of the internal (or, where the internal examiner is unavailable, or in instances where all examiners are external, another of the examiners). In addition to the types of minor correction noted above, major corrections may include: more substantial addition of paragraphs, including the incorporation of some new material, reordering and restructuring of chapters, or some additional data analyses.

If the examiners agree that the requirements for the relevant research degree concerned *have not yet been satisfied*, they may recommend:

(iv)   Revise and Resubmit: that the PGR should be permitted a period not exceeding 12 months (for full-time PGRs) or 24 months (for part-time PGRs) from the date on which they received notification of the revisions to be made, in which to thoroughly revise their thesis for resubmission, using the guidance set out in the examiners' joint report. The PGR will be liable for a resubmission fee: https://www.sussex.ac.uk/study/fees-funding/tuition-fees. A PGR will normally be given only one opportunity to revise and resubmit their thesis.

Examination outcomes following a resubmission

12.58   Following a resubmission, the below recommendations are available to the examiners:

If the examiners agree that the requirements for the relevant research degree have been *satisfied* they may recommend an Unconditional Pass, a Pass with Minor Corrections, or a Pass with Major Corrections as per 12.57.

If the examiners agree that the requirements for the relevant research degree *have not been satisfied* they may recommend:

(i)   *(in the case of PhD candidates, only)* that the degree of MPhil should be awarded with no corrections to the thesis; *OR*

(ii)   *(in the case of PhD candidates, only)* that the degree of MPhil should be awarded subject to minor corrections to the thesis, to be completed within three months (for full-time PGRs) or six months (for part-time PGRs) of the PGR receiving the list of corrections, to the satisfaction of the internal (or, where the internal examiner is unavailable, or in instances where all examiners are external, another of the examiners); *OR*

(iii) *(in the case of PhD candidates, only)* that the degree of MPhil should be awarded subject to major corrections to the thesis, to be completed within six months (for full-time PGRs) or 12 months (for part-time PGRs) of the PGR receiving the list of corrections, to the satisfaction of the internal (or, where the internal examiner is unavailable, or in instances where all examiners are external, another of the examiners); *OR*

(iv) that no degree should be awarded.

Examining Papers-Style theses

12.59 In examining a thesis of this kind (note 12.12-12.14), examiners should be aware that the criteria for recommending an outcome are the same as for any other thesis and include viva performance (i.e. the PGR should be able give a satisfactory defence of the thesis in the viva). Successful peer review and the publication of papers does not guarantee a pass outcome at examination and the examiners should pay particular attention to the consistency or otherwise of the quality of those parts of the thesis which have not been submitted for publication (e.g. linking chapters).

Examiners' Joint report

12.60 It is the responsibility of the internal examiner to ensure that the examiners complete and submit the Joint Report form to the Examinations and Assessment team within two weeks of the viva. Where possible, the report should be completed on the day of the viva.

12.61 The Joint Report should provide sufficient detail to permit the RDPAB to assess whether the basis for the examiners' decision is sound and, where a corrections or revisions outcome is recommended, the required changes should be included in the report. If the examiners wish to make additional suggestions which do not relate directly to the examination outcome (e.g. in relation to potential future publications), these must be listed separately from the Joint Report and will not form part of the corrections or revisions against which the PGR's corrected/revised thesis will be subsequently considered.

12.62 Examiners may indicate to the PGR the provisional outcome of the viva and the extent of any necessary revisions to the thesis being recommended. However, such indications are not definitive; the final outcome will not be formally communicated to the PGR by the Examinations and Assessment team until the Joint Report has been reviewed by the RDPAB and, in the case of a recommendation for the award of a degree, ratified by Senate.

12.63 If an examiner has marked a copy of the thesis (hard copy or digital) with typographical errors which should be corrected, the copy of the thesis may be given to the PGR after the viva.

12.64 Should any clarification be needed about the required changes, the communication should take place via the main supervisor. The examiners must not have any direct communication with the PGR during any period permitted for corrections or revisions; specifically, they must not advise the PGR whether the extent of the changes made is likely to be satisfactory or not, or whether the PGR's work is ready for re-examination.

Consideration of the examiners' reports

12.65 Following the submission of the Joint Report to the Examinations and Assessment team, the examiners' recommendation will be considered by the RDPAB 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 RDPAB may seek clarification from the examiners on the basis of their recommendation and may ask the report to be updated.

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

Disagreement between examiners

12.67   Where the examiners fail to agree between themselves whether or not a PGR has satisfied the requirements for a particular degree, the examiners should submit individual reports to the Examinations and Assessment team to be put to the RDPAB together with a recommendation from the ADRI, or nominee(s), for the appointment of an additional external examiner. The additional external examiner will decide (on the basis of the other examiners' reports and the thesis) whether or not the PGR has satisfied the requirements for the degree. The decision of the additional external examiner will be final.

Corrections outcomes

12.68   The final version of the corrected thesis (accompanied by a covering note to the examiners listing the location and detail of all changes made to the thesis) must be submitted by the PGR to the Examinations and Assessment team by the deadline stipulated in the formal notification of the outcome of the viva.

12.69   The Examinations and Assessment team will send the corrected thesis to the internal examiner (where the internal examiner is unavailable or in instances where all examiners are external, another of the examiners), who should consider the corrections and respond to the Examinations and Assessment team within two weeks of receipt of the corrected thesis.

12.70   Examiners may not require additional corrections (minor or major) following submission of the corrected thesis. If the PGR has satisfactorily completed the corrections stipulated following the viva, they should be considered to have satisfied the conditions to which their pass outcome was subject.

12.71   PGRs have one opportunity to complete the required corrections by the examiners. Failure by the PGR to complete the corrections to the satisfaction of the internal examiner (or, where the internal examiner is unavailable or in instances where all examiners are external, another of the examiners) will result in failure of the degree.

12.72   Failure by the PGR to submit the corrected thesis by the stated deadline will result in failure of the degree.

12.73   In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to apply for an extension to the correction period (up to one month for minor corrections, or up to three months for major corrections, for full-time PGRs; double in either case for part-time PGRs). PGRs should contact the Examinations and Assessment team to discuss their circumstances in advance of the deadline for submitting their corrected thesis.

Revision and resubmission of the thesis

12.74   Where the examiners recommend that the thesis should be revised and resubmitted for examination, the Examinations and Assessment team will formally notify the PGR once the examiners' Joint Report has been approved by the RDPAB.

12.75   The formal notification of the outcome to the PGR will include written guidance on the revisions needed to bring the thesis up to the required standard, as supplied by the examiners, and the deadline for the resubmission of the thesis.

12.76   Upon formal notification, the PGR will be asked to acknowledge the outcome and to pay any appropriate fees. PGRs should note that once the thesis has been resubmitted for examination, they will not be able to revert to the outcome of the original examination.

12.77   Should the PGR need any clarification regarding the recommended revisions, they should contact their main supervisor. The PGR should not communicate with the examiners during the period of revision.

12.78   PGRs have one opportunity to complete the required revisions by the examiners. Failure by the PGR to submit the revised thesis by the resubmission deadline will result in failure of the degree.

12.79   In exceptional circumstances, it may be possible to apply for an extension of up to six months to the revision period for full-time PGRs, or up to 12 months for part-time PGRs. PGRs should contact the Examinations and Assessment team to discuss their circumstances in advance of the deadline for resubmitting their thesis.

Examination following revision and resubmission

12.80   The possible outcomes of the examination following re-submission are as per 12.58 above.

12.81   The PGR should prepare and submit for examination their revised thesis as per the [University's requirements](). The PGR must also pay the any required fees before resubmission.

12.82   The re-examination of a PGR following the revision and resubmission of the thesis will normally be conducted by the individuals who conducted the original examination. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. due to a substantial change in the health or employment circumstances of an examiner), a new examiner or examiners may need to be appointed by the RDPAB.

12.83   Where an examiner must be replaced between an initial examination and a re-examination of the thesis, they should be appointed as above. The second examination will normally have the same status as any other re-examination. The new examiner should have access to the original examiners' reports in order to inform their assessment, but the primary measure of success should be the academic judgement of the examiners as to whether the standards of the award have been met, rather than whether the revisions outlined by the original examiner have been made. Exceptionally, where the examiners agree that the change of examiner may have resulted in conflicting views about the nature of appropriate revisions, they may recommend (to the RDPAB) a further referral of the thesis for revision and resubmission.

12.84   The decision as to whether or not to require a PGR to attend a viva following the revision and resubmission of a thesis is left to the discretion of the examiners. However, if the examiners are

considering a downgrade (with or without corrections) or fail outcome, a second viva must be offered. The decision on whether to require a viva should be made as soon as possible (and no later than eight weeks) after the receipt of the revised thesis by the examiners.

12.85　Where a second viva is required, it should take place within three months of the submission of the revised thesis, and the PGR must be given at least three weeks' notice.

12.86　As per the original examination, and whether or not a viva is required, each examiner must submit an independent report on the resubmitted thesis within eight weeks of receipt of the revised thesis, and prior to conferring about the need for a second viva and the completion of the Joint Report. The sharing of the independent reports will be facilitated by the Examinations and Assessment team.

12.87　In all cases, the examiners' Joint Report should be submitted to the Examinations and Assessment team within three months of the date of the resubmission of the revised thesis for re-examination.

Thesis deposit

12.88　If the examiners recommend that the degree should be awarded, and following the completion, to the satisfaction of the internal examiner (or, where the internal examiner is unavailable or in instances where all examiners are external, another of the examiners), of any required corrections, the PGR shall deposit the thesis (and/or other examined material) in accordance with the [University's requirements](#).

12.89　Deposited material remains the property of the University.

12.90　Failure to deposit the thesis in accordance with the University's requirements, and within the deadlines stipulated in the relevant correspondence from the Examinations and Assessment team, will mean that the PGR will not have met the requirements of the research degree, and will be deemed to have failed.

12.91　The ratification of the award following examination will usually be communicated to the PGR in the form of an award letter within two weeks of the thesis being deposited in the institutional repository.

12.92　The embargoing of theses is addressed in section 13.

13.　Dissemination of research results, intellectual property rights and responsibilities

13.1　PGRs are expected to comply with reasonable requests from the University and the requirements of funding bodies (where applicable) for recording the outputs of research conducted as part of a research degree, and career progression information.

13.2　PGRs will be encouraged to make presentations on the results of their research in the University and at external meetings, and where appropriate to different audiences (e.g. academic peers, undergraduate students, school pupils). They should receive appropriate training for this purpose. PGRs should also be encouraged to submit work for publication during the course of their studies, where appropriate. PGRs are bound by the University's [Publications and Copyright Policy](#).

13.3   In line with the University's commitment to Open Research, as set out in the [Open Access webpages](#), all theses deposited by PGRs after examination will be available to the general public, in full, for consultation and for reproduction (as permitted in copyright law), unless approval is obtained for embargo or redaction as set out below.

Thesis embargo

13.4   A thesis may be embargoed (i.e. withheld from the general public and none of the material reproduced; note 13.5) for a fixed period or made available with redaction for the following reasons:

- the PGR has an agreement with a publisher to publish all or part of the thesis (normally limited to two years);
- the thesis contains commercially sensitive information that may prejudice the commercial interests of another person or company;
- the thesis contains material that was obtained under a promise of confidentiality;
- the thesis contains sensitive material about an individual or individuals that may endanger their physical or mental well-being, or that of the PGR;
- unlicensed reproduction of third-party copyright material (copyright guidance is provided by the Library), or;
- exemption under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

13.5   Where a thesis is embargoed, metadata will be created citing the author and the title and this will be visible in both the Institutional Repository and in EThOS (the British Library Electronic Theses On-line System).

13.6   In considering whether to embargo or redact a thesis, a PGR and their supervisor(s) must ensure that they take into account all appropriate considerations, including intellectual property issues and the expectations under the University's [Research Data Management Policy](#).

13.7   Any request to embargo, subject to a valid reason as set out in 13.4, must be approved by the PGR, the main supervisor, and the ADRI or nominee(s).

13.8   A thesis may be embargoed for a maximum period of three years, or as otherwise set out in the terms and conditions of the party responsible for funding the PGR's research, if agreed by all parties at the outset of the project. The PGR and their main supervisor are jointly responsible for adhering to the funder's terms and conditions, where applicable.

13.9   Where the initial embargo period request is less than the maximum permitted (see above), an extension may be requested up to the maximum. Such requests will be subject to the approval of the PGR, the main supervisor, and the ADRI, or nominee(s).

13.10   Lifting an embargo in advance of the set date requires the consent of the PGR, the main supervisor and – where relevant – the funder.

13.11   If a dispute about the embargo of a thesis arises between the PGR and their main supervisor, the decision of the main supervisor is final; if a dispute arises between supervisors, the decision of the ADRI, or nominee(s), is final.

13.12   A thesis may be permanently embargoed in the following circumstances:

    (i)   contractual agreement with a funder;
    (ii)   issues of national or personal security, or;
    (iii)   when requested by the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Research & Innovation) for a breach of the Research Integrity Policy Statement.

All requests for permanent embargo must be approved by the RDPAB.

13.13   With the approval of the main supervisor, and subject to a valid reason as set out in 13.4, a PGR may deposit a redacted version of the thesis, with the examined (unredacted) copy held by the University. Redaction for third-party copyright infringement will be indefinite unless notification of clearance is received.

Intellectual Property

13.14   Except by formal agreement between the PGR and an external organisation, copyright of the original material in a thesis is owned by the PGR. In many cases, however, other forms of intellectual property arising from the thesis, including patentable inventions and software, may be subject to contractual conditions, for example with the funders of the research, which may require ownership to be vested in a third party or in the University. Furthermore, in many instances, intellectual property is jointly conceived by a PGR together with their supervisor(s) or with other colleagues in the same research group. In such cases, the University would expect to own such intellectual property rights but would share any benefits accruing from its exploitation with the PGR according to the University's Policy on Exploitation and Commercialisation of Research and Intellectual Property.

13.15   Where the PGR's research is funded by a commercial or other external organisation, such as UKRI, to which the University owes contractual responsibilities, the main supervisor will ensure that the PGR receives and, where appropriate, signs a copy of the contract covering the research.

14.   Academic appeals

14.1   An academic appeal is a challenge to, or request for, reconsideration of a decision by an academic body regarding progress, assessment and/or award. PGRs are therefore entitled, if they can evidence eligible grounds for appeal, to challenge the outcome of a Formal Progression Review or the viva.

14.2   PGRs considering making an appeal should consult the Academic Appeal Regulations for information about the relevant deadlines (10 University working days following receipt of the outcome) and the grounds for appeal.

14.3   PGRs can seek independent advice from the Students' Union. Advice about the process and the regulations is also available from Student Advice and Guidance service, via the Student Centre.

15.   Complaints

15.1   PGRs wishing to make a complaint about their experience at the University (e.g. concerning supervision, facilities, or the conduct of a member of University staff) should follow the process

outlines on the Student Hub pages: https://student.sussex.ac.uk/complaints/university/procedure.

16. Research away from Sussex (excluding PGRs on a distance learning mode)

16.1   Non-distance learning PGRs may need to undertake research away from Sussex for a variety of reasons. This may be for data collection (e.g. fieldwork, archival work) or consultation with reference institutions (libraries/archives/museums). It may also be because they are undertaking their research in industry as part of an approved studentship or undertaking research in a partner academic institution.

16.2   The ability of Student visa holding PGRs to undertake research away from Sussex may be limited by UKVI requirements and the University cannot override these. Student visa holding PGRs should consult the Attendance, Engagement and Absence Policy and seek appropriate advice from their Faculty/School and the International Advice team. Said advice may require formal approval being obtained from both their Faculty/School and the UKVI Compliance team prior to committing to undertake research away from Sussex.

16.3   The period of time that a PGR may spend undertaking research away from Sussex will normally be up to two years for a full-time PGR, and up to four years for a part-time PGR (noting 16.14 and 16.18 in relation to arrangements involving other academic institutions).

16.4   Where a PGR is undertaking research away from Sussex, the main supervisor retains primary responsibility for maintaining oversight of the PGR and their research project. Supervisory meetings should continue as per the Attendance, Engagement and Absence Policy, but may be held by video-conferencing rather than face-to-face. Consideration should be given as to how research training and participation in other academic activities can be facilitated while the PGR is away from Sussex.

16.5   Where a PGR is undertaking research away from Sussex, Formal Progression Reviews should continue as per section 9 of this document. Where possible, Progression Review Panel meetings are expected to take place in person; the Faculty PGRC will be responsible for considering and approving the use of videoconferencing to conduct a meeting.

16.6   Approval for undertaking research away from Sussex at a partner academic institution (university or research institute) or in industry is covered below. Approval for undertaking research away from Sussex for the purpose of data collection, or consultation with reference institutions, rests with ADRI or nominee(s).

16.7   PGRs are responsible for informing their Faculty/School when they will be conducting research away from Sussex, and for completing the University's travel insurance documentation prior to travel overseas. Faculties/Schools should inform Student Data and Records when PGRs are undertaking research away from Sussex, as per the prescribed process.

16.8   In all cases, PGRs travelling for University business (work, research or study) are required to complete an Overseas Travel Safety and Security Risk Assessment (OTSSRA form). This includes PGRs travelling to their home country for research.

16.9   PGRs must ensure that any change of address, due to undertaking research away from Sussex or otherwise, is kept up to date in Sussex Direct.

Arrangements involving industry for individual Sussex PGRs

16.10   An individual PGR may, with the approval of the Chair of the PGRSC, have an external subsidiary supervisor based in industry (see section 4) and/or undertake their research, or part of their research, at a suitably equipped company as part of an industry-based studentship award.

16.11   Where a PGR is based wholly or partly in industry, the PGR, the Faculty/School and the company must be bound by an individual PGR agreement. In such cases, the Faculty/School should confer with the PGR Scholarships team for guidance on the implementation of an agreement.

Arrangements involving academic institutions for individual Sussex PGRs

External supervision and limited external academic input

16.12   An individual PGR registered on a research degree at Sussex may, with the approval of the Faculty PGRC concerned, receive academic input from a partner academic institution which does not involve a period of research at the partner, registration as a PGR at the partner or an award from the partner (see below for alternative models). Such arrangements might include the appointment of an external subsidiary supervisor (see below), or access to training or taught courses. Any financial implications are the responsibility of the Faculty/School concerned. Responsibility for monitoring such arrangements lies with the Faculty PGRC. It is strongly recommended that the Faculty/School put in place an agreement between all parties at the outset of the arrangement.

16.13   An external subsidiary supervisor (co-supervisor) for a PGR registered on a research degree at Sussex should be appointed as per section 4 of this document, including the requirement that they undertake the required training (see 4.17) . In addition to conferring with Student Data and Records on the appointment process (which may include right to work checks), the Faculty/School is responsible for ensuring that the external supervisor is qualified to take on the role, and has an understanding of relevant Sussex policies and procedures to enable them to undertake their role successfully.

Outgoing visiting PGRs

16.14   An individual PGR registered for a research degree at Sussex may undertake a period of research at another academic institution (including registration as a visiting PGR) as part of their Sussex programme. Such PGRs will not be awarded a qualification by the other institution. They will maintain their registration at Sussex and (unless specific alternative arrangements are agreed by the University) will continue to pay tuition fees at Sussex during this period (which will normally be up to one year for a full-time PGR, and up to two years for a part-time PGR).

16.15   For Student visa holding PGRs, undertaking a period of research at another academic institution will require a change of study location request. If approved, the PGR much continue to meet the requirements of the [Attendance, Engagement and Absence Policy](#).

Arrangements involving other academic institutions at programme level

16.16   The University recognises that there are circumstances in which the value of a research degree at Sussex may be enhanced through formal collaboration with another academic institution (university or research institute) or with industry.

16.17   The PGRSC must have input into and approval of institutional partnership agreements which include PGR provision or support in any form.

Academic input from one or more partner institutions leading to a University of Sussex award only

16.18   A Faculty PGRC may seek approval from the PGRSC for a research degree leading to a qualification of the University of Sussex which requires or permits academic input from one or more academic partner institutions, for example where Sussex is a member of an approved multi-institution training grant or international research collaboration. The academic input may be a requirement for a period of study at a partner (normally up to one year for a full-time PGR, and up to two years for a part-time PGR) which may involve registration at the partner institution as a visiting PGR and/or academic input in the form of training, credit-bearing modules, or the appointment of external subsidiary supervisors.

16.19   Where credit-bearing modules are taken at an academic partner, the partner will be expected to provide a transcript for the PGRs where the modules contribute to the final award, and the result(s) will be recorded on the PGRs' records at Sussex.

16.20   While the Framework on Collaborative Research Degrees (see Appendix 5 of this document) focusses on provision leading to a joint or double award, the Framework may nevertheless provide a useful tool when considering and entering into collaborative arrangements leading to a Single Degree from Sussex, particularly where split- or off-site arrangements are being proposed; the institutional considerations and 'red lines' laid out in the Framework will be as applicable in such arrangements as in collaborations leading to a Joint or Double Degree.

Double and joint research degrees

16.21   Where strategically justified, the University may collaborate with other, mainly international, universities to offer joint or double research degrees. The rules that govern a joint or double research degree (e.g. in terms of selection, admission, induction, supervision, progress and review arrangements, training, and assessment) must be negotiated between the institutions prior to the onboarding of PGRs, so that the minimum requirements of both can be met. The considerations and requirements are laid out in detail in the Framework for Collaborative Research Degrees (see Appendix 5 of this document).

16.22   The PGRSC will need to approve any exceptions to this document and will only do this where there is good reason and when the PGRSC can be assured that the standard of the research degree and the quality of the PGR experience will not be compromised.

17. Arrangements for non-Sussex PGRs (excluding those attending Sussex under a collaborative agreement)

Supervision of individual non-Sussex PGRs by Sussex academics

17.1   An academic at Sussex may serve as a subsidiary supervisor (co-supervisor) for an individual PGR registered on a research degree at another awarding academic institution. Such arrangements are undertaken on an individual basis and may be subject to relevant institutional or Faculty-/School-

level policies.

17.2   Supervision by an academic from Sussex under such an arrangement does not bestow on the PGR concerned any rights or benefits associated with registration at Sussex, nor any entitlement to an award from Sussex.

Incoming Visiting PGRs

17.3   Sussex offers a range of opportunities for Visiting PGRs, as outlined below. Regardless of the type of visiting arrangement undertaken, a Visiting PGR will not be eligible for the award of any qualification from Sussex.

17.4   For each type of visiting arrangement, local induction, including a health and safety induction where appropriate, is the responsibility of the host Faculty/School.

PGR informal visit

17.5   Individual PGRs registered at another awarding academic institution who wish to visit Sussex in order to attend a conference or seminar, to meet PGRs and faculty, to observe specific methodological practice, and/or to plan a future collaboration or supervised visit, may visit for a maximum of two weeks.

17.6   Such visits should be arranged locally within the Faculty/School, on the basis of a letter of invitation from the Head of School, who should maintain details of any such visits.

17.7   Informal visits bestow no entitlement to supervisory input, and thus the Attendance, Engagement and Absence Policy does not apply. Where relevant, the Visiting PGR must be insured to be in laboratories, but not to work independently.

17.8   No formal application is required and no fee will be charged. Where relevant, any visa requirements are the responsibility of the Visiting PGR. The UKVI Compliance team will provide input as to the correct registration status and what documentation may need to be kept on file. The International Advice team will provide advice regarding the application for a Standard Visitor visa, if required.

PGR placement

17.9   PGRs who do not require any academic supervision but who wish to visit the University in order to independently use laboratory equipment or consult archives or other holdings, may visit for a maximum of three months. Where a visit is originally planned for less than three months, the visit may be extended up to the three month maximum. Once the maximum has been reached, visits may not be extended or repeated.

17.10   A PGR placement arrangement provides access to a range of facilities and resources, and as such incurs an administration fee: see https://www.sussex.ac.uk/study/phd/visiting-doctoral-researchers for up-to-date information.

17.11   A PGR placement does not bestow entitlement to supervisory input, and thus the Attendance, Engagement and Absence Policy does not apply.

17.12   An application must be made via the online application system and will be considered by the Faculty/School. Where appropriate, the Admissions team will provide documentation to support a Visiting PGR's visa application; the visa application is the responsibility of the incoming Visiting PGR.

17.13   Where a Faculty/School accepts an application for a placement visit, a Sussex academic should be identified as the Visiting PGR's local point of contact and to facilitate induction and training (where relevant). The Home supervisor remains responsible for intellectual content and research direction.

17.14   The Visiting PGR should be insured to work independently under standard safety guidelines and practices.

PGR supervised visit

17.15   Visiting PGRs requiring academic supervision by a member of Sussex faculty may visit for a maximum of 12 months. Where a visit is originally planned for less than 12 months, the visit may be extended up to the 12 month maximum. Once the maximum has been reached, visits may not be extended or repeated.

17.16   Unless the visit falls under a Memorandum of Understanding (see below), Visiting PGRs undertaking a supervised visit will be charged the full tuition fee for the course, pro-rated based on the length of their visit, and will receive the same level of academic supervision as a Sussex-registered PGR.

17.17   An application must be made via the online application system and will be considered by the Faculty/School.

17.18   As a condition of admission, applicants must meet the University's normal admission requirements, including, where the applicant will require a Student visa, the University's minimum English language proficiency requirement.

17.19   Where a Faculty/School accepts an application for a supervised visit, a Sussex supervisor will be assigned and will take on responsibility for a significant portion of the scholarship and research direction of the thesis during the visit (i.e. equivalent supervision to a non-visiting PGR).

17.20   The Attendance, Engagement and Absence Policy applies in all cases, regardless of the length of the supervised visit.

17.21   The Visiting PGR will be insured to work independently under standard safety guidelines and practices.

PGR supervised visit under a partnership memorandum of understanding (MoU)

17.22   A supervised visit under an MoU takes the form of the supervised visit described above. However, where an MoU exists with a partnership institution, and the terms of that partnership explicitly state that the tuition fees for visiting PGRs will be waived, the Visiting PGR will not be liable for tuition fees for the duration of the supervised visit.

17.23   MoUs involving any form of PGR provision or support require the approval of the PGRSC.

Programme-level academic input from Sussex that does not lead to a University of Sussex award

17.24   A Faculty PGRC may seek approval from PGRSC for PGRs registered at another university (i.e. as

part of a multi-institution training grant, or an international research collaboration with Sussex) to be required or permitted to undertake a period of study at Sussex and/or receive academic input from Sussex in the form of training, credit-bearing modules, or the appointment of external subsidiary supervisors. In such cases, it is expected that the nature and scope of the input will be laid out in a formal agreement (e.g. a collaboration agreement) between the institutions.

17.25   Where appropriate, Sussex may maintain outline PGR (or 'shadow') records for the PGRs concerned.

Review / Contacts / References	
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Appendix 1: Application of the Procedures on Research Degrees

Section (Whole section, unless otherwise stated.)	Application (From effective date: 01 August 2025)
1. Introduction	All PGRs, regardless of start date.
2. The criteria for the award of research degrees	All PGRs, regardless of start date.
3. Selection, admission and induction of PGRs • Clauses 3.1 – 3.10	All applicants commencing the 2024/25 admissions cycle for 2025/26 entry.
3. Selection, admission and induction of PGRs • Clauses 3.11 – 3.15	All PGRs, regardless of start date.
3. Selection, admission and induction of PGRs • Clauses 3.16 – 3.18	All new starters commencing 2024/25 or later.
4. Supervision • All clauses except 4.17 *(noting mandatory supervisor training available only from 2025/26)*	All PGRs, regardless of start date.
4. Supervision • Clause 4.17	All PGR supervisors from 2025/26 onwards.
5. Responsibilities of PGRs and supervisors *(noting mandatory supervisor training available only from 2025/26)*	All PGRs, regardless of start date.
6. Registration	All PGRs, regardless of start date.
7. Changes to PGRs' registration and personal circumstances (including illness)	All PGRs, regardless of start date.
8. Working hours and holidays • Clauses 8.1 – 8.3	All PGRs, regardless of start date. Where there are existing strong arguments for variation, these should be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Faculty PGRC, as per 8.2.
8. Working hours and holidays • Clauses 8.4 – 8.6	All PGRs, regardless of start date.
9. Progress and review arrangements	All PGRs, regardless of start date.
10. Training and development • Clauses 10.1 – 10.2; 10.4 – 10.5; 10.14 – 10.17	All PGRs, regardless of start date.
10. Training and development • Clause 10.3	In relation to training modules for PGRs in Research Ethics and Integrity and Research Data Management: all new starters commencing 2025/26 onwards.
10. Training and development • Clauses 10.6 – 10.13	All new starters commencing 2024/25 onwards.
11. Research integrity and ethics	All PGRs, regardless of start date.

• All clauses except 11.9-11.10	
11. Research integrity and ethics • Clause 11.9	All PGRs commencing 2025/26 or later.
11. Research integrity and ethics • Clause 11.10	In relation to the requirement for a data management plan to be in place by the first Formal Progression Review: all PGRs commencing 2024/25 or later.
12. Examination • All clauses except 12.41	All 'first attempt' research degree examinations commencing on or after 16 September 2024.
12. Examination • Clause 12.41	All 'first attempt' research degree examinations commencing on or after 01 August 2025.
13. Dissemination of research results, intellectual property rights and responsibilities	All 'first attempt' research degree examinations commencing on or after 16 September 2024.
14. Academic appeals	All PGRs, regardless of start date.
15. Complaints	All PGRs, regardless of start date.
16. Research away from Sussex (excluding PGRs on a distance learning mode)	All PGRs, regardless of start date.
17. Arrangements for non-Sussex PGRs • All clauses except 17.18	All PGRs, regardless of start date.
17. Arrangements for non-Sussex PGRs • Clause 17.18	All visiting PGRs commencing 2024/25 or later.
Appendix 2: Framework for PhD by Published Works	All PGRs registered on a PhD by Published Works from 2023/24 onwards.
Appendix 3: Procedure on Remote Vivas	All PGRs, regardless of start date.
Appendix 4: Framework for integrated PhD programmes	All current and future integrated PhD programmes.
Appendix 5: Framework for Collaborative Research Degrees	All future research degree collaborations commencing from 2024/25 onwards.
Appendix 6: Statement on the use of Generative AI by Postgraduate Researchers	All PGRs, regardless of start date.

Appendix 2: Framework for PhDs by Published Works

1.   Introduction

1.1   This Procedure should be read in conjunction with both the University's Regulation 23 and the Procedures on Research Degrees (PoRD). The Postgraduate Researcher Sub-Committee (PGRSC) is responsible for implementing this Procedure and for reviewing it annually.

1.2   This Procedure addresses PhDs by Published Works. Unless otherwise stipulated below, Regulation 23 and/or the PoRD apply.

The nature and purpose of PhDs by Published Works

1.3   The award of PhD by Published Works is a route available to current and former staff who have considerable published works and do not already hold a PhD. The award and admissions eligibility criteria set out below must be met.

1.4   Offering a route to a PhD by Published Works may offer strategic value in terms of staff development, recognition and retention.

2.   Approval

2.1   The approval to offer a PhD by Published Works in a given disciplinary area sits with the PGR Sub-Committee (PGRSC). In all cases, Faculties/Schools are encouraged to seek advice from the Sussex Researcher School (pgr-governance@sussex.ac.uk) before proceeding with submitting a request.

3.   Award criteria

3.1   When interpreting the standard PhD award criteria (as per the PoRD) in the case of a PhD by Published Works, the examiners should seek evidence that the candidate's 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.

3.2   '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.

3.3   '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.

3.4   Any work that has been or is to be included in a submission for any other award in any University, whether successful or unsuccessful, is not admissible in whole or partial fulfilment of the requirements of this degree.

4.   Admissions criteria

4.1   Candidates must normally be graduates of at least 5 years' standing and have already obtained a Master's degree or be able to provide evidence of having received research training or equivalent experience.

4.2   Candidates must normally be current employees of the University with a contract which extends beyond the registration period of the PhD by Published Works, and whose contract falls within one of the following categories: Education and Research; Research; or Teaching and Scholarship.

4.3   Exceptionally, the Executive Dean may recommend a candidate to the Postgraduate Researcher Sub-Committee (PGRSC) who does not meet the admissions criteria, if they can demonstrate that submission of the work for a PhD by Published Works is in the interests of the institution.

4.4   It is expected that published works will have been carried out during employment at the University.

4.5   To ensure the currency of the research, published works submitted should normally have been carried out no more than eight years prior to registration (noting the potential impact of periods of parental or sick leave).

5.   Admissions process

5.1   Applications should be made per the process determined by the receiving Faculty/School.

5.2   There will be three standard admission points during the year as with other research degrees, but admission may be exceptionally approved at the start of any calendar month.

5.3   In place of a research proposal, candidates should provide the following:

   i.   A list of the published work to be submitted.
   ii.   A supporting proposal that outlines the case for the published work to be considered for the award based on the criteria outlined above.
   iii. A signed declaration that the published work has not been and is not to be submitted as part of any other degree.

5.4   Applications will be considered by the relevant Associate Dean (Research and Innovation; ADRI), or nominee(s), in consultation with the relevant academic colleagues, as appropriate.

5.5   Successful applicants will be assigned a supervisory team as per the PoRD.

6.   Registration and Fees

6.1   Successful applicants will be registered part-time and submission of the thesis must occur within the minimum and maximum period of registration (12 months).

6.2   Standard home/international PGR tuition fees apply (https://www.sussex.ac.uk/study/fees-funding/tuition-fees).

7.   Submission requirements

7.1   The submission will take the form of a portfolio consisting of: an abstract of the submission, including a list of the items of published work; the items of published work (the research for which will not have been undertaken during registration for the PhD), and a 10,000 word supporting paper, submitted following a period of registration and supervision not to exceed one year, that:

i. Summarises each published work to be submitted (may be added as appendices and not included in word limit).
ii. Provides a commentary on the status of the publishing outlets (may be added as appendices and not included in word limit).
iii. Describes the interrelationship of the published works to be submitted.
iv. Gives a critical review of the current state of knowledge and research in the relevant field.
v. Reports on the reception of the published works as indicated by citations and reviews.
vi. Demonstrates how the published works to be submitted have made a significant contribution to knowledge in a particular field.

7.2 The requirements regarding the preparation and submission of the thesis are as per the PoRD, including the requirement to give notice of intention to submit.

8. Examination

8.1 The examination and conferment of award will be conducted in accordance with University Regulation 23 and the PoRD, as per conventional doctorates.

Review / Contacts / References	
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Appendix 3: Procedure on Remote Vivas

1. Overview

1.1 The submission and examination of postgraduate researchers (PGRs) is addressed in section 12 of the Procedures on Research Degrees (PoRD). This procedure provides additional guidance on the conduct of the oral examination (viva voce or 'viva') when one or more of the participants (and particularly the PGR) is based remotely and should be read in conjunction with section 12 of the PoRD.

Remote vivas

1.2 The PGR and the examiners (and independent chair, where relevant) should all be present at the viva. 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. A 'remote viva' is where one or more of the parties cannot be present at the University of Sussex, and requires approval by the Research Degrees Progression and Award Board (RDPAB).

1.3 With the exception of the additional considerations and requirements laid out below, the conduct of the viva is expected to follow the PoRD, with the format following that of an in-person viva.

2 Consideration and approval of remove vivas

2.1 Requests for a remote viva must be reviewed and approved in advance by the Chair, or Co-Chair, of the RDPAB (or their nominee) under delegated authority from the RDPAB.

2.2 For permission to be granted, the Remote Viva Approval Form must be completed and retained, to confirm agreement of all parties[2], the time, date, confirmation that a private location is available and suitable supporting technology can be used, and that there are no concerns about the appropriateness of conducting the viva remotely.

2.3 The PGR's needs and preferences are central to the decision-making process.

2.4 A remote viva may not be appropriate where concerns have been raised about academic misconduct.

2.5 The suitability of a remote viva should be considered carefully where there are well-being concerns about the PGR.

2.6 Approval of a remote viva may be withheld where a review of the request indicates that the PGR will be disadvantaged by the conditions of a remote examination.

2.7 Faculties/Schools may be required to nominate a (normally) senior member of Sussex Faculty to act as independent chair. The remote viva can proceed without an independent chair, however the University reserves the right to require an independent chair in certain cases (see section 12 of the PoRD).

3 Support during and after a remote viva

3.1 Under the PoRD, a PGR may request (with the consent of the examiners), that a supervisor or another member of academic or professional support staff approved by the relevant Associate

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[2] 'all parties' refers to PGR candidate, internal examiner, external examiner and *viva* chair.

Dean (Research and Innovation; ADRI), or nominee(s), is present at the viva as a silent observer. This applies regardless of the configuration of the locations of the respective parties in the viva. However, the silent observer is unlikely to be able to be co-located with the PGR where it is the PGR who joins remotely. .

3.2   Where the PGR is joining the viva remotely, and given the significance of the outcome of the viva to the PGR, the communication of the viva outcome should be sensitive to the fact that the normal in-person departmental support may not be readily available to them. It is therefore recommended that the PGR have someone available to support them (either online or in-person) when the outcome is communicated. Where the PGR opts to have a silent observer present during the remote viva, the same person may be present for the outcome. Otherwise, if the PGR opted not to have a silent observer, or they opt to have a different individual present for the outcome, they may choose to have a supervisor, other academic or professional support staff, friend or family member present for the communication of the outcome.

4   Technology considerations

4.1   It is recommended that the viva be conducted using University-supported video-conferencing such as Microsoft Teams, or Zoom, however other platforms can be used if agreed by all participants.

4.2   The viva must commence using both video and audio, and video should normally be maintained by all parties throughout. The internal examiner must confirm the identity of the PGR at the start of the viva.

4.3   If there is a failure in the connection/technology, attempts should be made to re-connect. It is suggested that attempts to reconnect could halt after 20 minutes, with the agreement of all parties.

4.4   If the viva has to be halted for technological reasons, the internal examiner should consult with the external examiner via an alternative method (e.g. telephone) to ascertain if sufficient discussion has taken place for a viva outcome to be recommended to the RDPAB.

4.5   The decision to postpone, re-convene or conclude a remote viva should be made by the chair, or internal examiner if no chair is appointed.

5   Additional responsibilities for the viva chair

5.1   In the case of a remote viva, the role of the independent chair (or the internal examiner where no independent chair is appointed) is as per section 12 of the PoRD, with the addition of the following responsibilities:

i.   To arrange a test call with all parties separately ahead of the viva.
ii.   To collect and hold telephone numbers of all parties (and supervisors) for effective communication, in particular in case the viva has to be halted due to technical difficulties.
iii.   To confirm that all parties are comfortable with the arrangements and that the PGR and the examiners can see and hear each other clearly.
iv.   To verify the PGR's identity, if this cannot be done by the internal examiner.
v.   To consider the wellbeing of all parties, making clear the expectations of likely duration, that the PGR and examiners can request brief breaks if necessary, and ensuring that all parties have everything to hand that they require.
vi.   To ensure the quality of the video/online format does not detract from the examiners' ability to form a decision on the viva outcome, and that the PGR is not disadvantaged by the viva format.

vii. If visual links are terminated, to ensure that clear signposting between the parties continues and the PGR is not disadvantaged.
viii. To make the decision about whether the viva continues in the event of a serious or protracted breakdown in the connection.
ix. To make notes of what was covered during the viva, and if the candidate experienced difficulties in responding, due to the technology/format being used, and add these to the Research Degree Examiners' Joint Report form.

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Appendix 4: Framework for integrated PhD programmes

1. Introduction

1.1 This Framework lays out the University's position on Integrated PhD programmes. It should be read in conjunction with the University's Regulation 23 and the Procedures on Research Degrees (PoRD).

2. The nature and purpose of the Integrated PhD

2.1 An Integrated PhD programme (iPhD) combines taught modules at Master's level, enabling postgraduate researchers (PGRs) to broaden and/or deepen their knowledge in a specific area, with a substantive PhD research project. It differs from a standard PhD programme with respect to the volume and timing of the taught element.

2.2 The approval of an iPhD may be of particular value for:

i. interdisciplinary areas of research, where applicants typically do not have the necessary breadth and/or depth of knowledge to start a research project with immediate effect
ii. departments which frequently receive applications from individuals who have funding for a PGR programme of four years in duration and a Master's degree in the subject area (and so for whom a 1+3 route is not an option) but where the Master's degree has not provided the depth and/or breadth of knowledge or research preparation that would be required for an individual to start their research project with immediate effect
iii. departments which frequently receive applications from individuals who have a Master's degree in a cognate discipline (and so for whom a 1+3 route is unattractive) but who do not have the depth and/or breadth of knowledge, in the discipline in question, to start a research project with immediate effect (e.g. to facilitate a move from modern languages to linguistics).

3. Approval process

3.1 All iPhDs must be approved via PGR Sub-Committee (PGRSC). The taught element will require approval from the Portfolio Approval Sub-Committee (PASC) prior to consideration by the PGRSC. Standard home/international PhD fees apply.

4. Programme details

Structure and duration

4.1 An iPhD comprises:

i. an integrated studies component of one-year duration (or part-time equivalent), and
ii. a PhD research project of up to four years duration (or part-time equivalent; the 'research phase').

4.2 An Integrated PhD programme has a minimum registration period of three years full-time (six years part-time) and a maximum period of registration of five years full-time (ten years part-time). PGRs on an iPhD should plan their research so that they will submit within the maximum period of registration.

Intermission

4.3   Requests for intermission (sometimes referred to as 'temporary withdrawal') for PGRs registered on an iPhD will be dealt with according to the rules and processes for PGRs. If, however, an iPhD PGR needs to take an intermission during the taught element of the integrated studies component, then (depending on the duration and timing of the intermission) they may need to take an intermission for a full academic year in order to ensure that they receive all the required teaching and undertake all the required assessment for the taught element prior to progressing to the research phase of the programme.

Naming convention and final award

4.4   An iPhD should normally be advertised as PhD (Integrated) in XXXX (where XXXX is the title of the standard PhD programme that the iPhD programme maps onto).

4.5   PGRs who successfully complete an iPhD will be awarded a PhD in XXXX (e.g. PhD in Linguistics, PhD in Biology).

Admission requirements and process

4.6   The admission requirements for an iPhD are the same as for other PhD programmes, and should align with the Faculty's/School's standard admission requirements for a PhD, i.e. including the requirement for a Master's degree at a suitable level of attainment, if applicable.

4.7   The English language requirements for entry to an Integrated PhD programme are the same as for admission to a Faculty's/School's standard PhD programmes.

4.8   Where applicable, prospective PGRs should be asked to submit an outline research proposal during the application process as, although a detailed research proposal can be developed during the integrated studies year, it is important to ensure, from the outset, that there are sufficient expertise (and capacity) to supervise the prospective iPhD PGR in their area of interest. Submission of an outline research proposal can also enable the most appropriate main supervisor to be allocated from the start of the iPhD.

Entry points and timing of arrival

4.9   Most iPhDs will have a single-entry point in October of each academic year (i.e. that corresponds with the start of the standard PGT provision) in order to make use of existing Master's level taught modules.

4.10   PGRs registered on an iPhD are expected to be able to participate in the mode of attendance associated with the taught element (i.e. an on-campus mode of attendance). A PGR requiring a Student visa to study should ensure they are able to attend in-person teaching from the beginning of the academic year.

Recognition of prior learning

4.11   Given that the key purpose of an iPhD is to ensure that PGRs receive a comprehensive package of training, PGRs registered on an iPhD are not normally eligible for any recognition of prior learning towards the taught element.

Information

4.12   All new PGRs registered on an iPhD should receive an iPhD handbook from their Faculty/School.

PGR status

4.13   An iPhD PGR is treated as a PGR and subject to PGR Regulations from the outset of their programme, other than where specified in this procedure. In their first year, they should, for example, attend induction events for new PGRs, complete a Training Needs Analysis, undertake mandatory PGR training, and have access to other training opportunities and make use of PGR resources. It is strongly recommended that PGRs registered on an iPhD do not undertake any Doctoral Tutoring work during the taught element of the integrated studies year to avoid overload.

Exit awards

4.14   Where a PGR chooses to permanently withdraw from an iPhD, or where a PGR fails to progress from the integrated studies component to the research phase of an iPhD, they will be considered for an exit award appropriate to the credit achieved.

4.15   A Progression and Award Board (PAB) will determine eligibility for an exit award, based upon credits achieved in the integrated studies year prior to withdrawal, subject to UKVKI regulations for an individual on a Student visa and in accordance with the University of Sussex Academic Framework.

4.16   Only credit from the taught modules can contribute to the credit requirements of a Postgraduate Certificate or Postgraduate Diploma when awarded as an exit award.

4.17   Where insufficient credit has been accrued for a Postgraduate Certificate, Postgraduate Diploma or Masters of Research, then institutional credit for any modules passed will be awarded.

5.   Design of the academic programme

Integrated studies year

5.1   The integrated studies component is one year in duration (or part-time equivalent) and should be completed within the first year of registration (or part-time equivalent). Care must be taken to ensure that there is a reasonable spread of workload across the integrated studies year.

5.2   The integrated studies year comprises research training in the form of Masters-level modules worth 180 credits. These credits may be split equally between 90 taught and 90 research credits, or 120 taught and 60 research credits.

5.3   The integrated studies year must take the form of a bespoke pathway approved via the standard PASC course approval process, solely for delivery as part of the relevant iPhD. Existing Masters modules can be used, but a unique combination of modules is required, to meet UKVI requirements for a single visa to register on an iPhD.

5.4   The taught modules may focus on research skills and methods training, or on specialist subject knowledge, or a mixture of both. The taught modules may: (i) include tutorial modules i.e. which enable a PGR to study a particular subject in depth supported by tutorials with a named academic; (ii) include laboratory rotations if these are set up as taught modules, including an appropriate assessment regime (alternatively laboratory rotations may form part of the research element of the integrated studies year); and (iii) enable PGRs to choose, in consultation with their supervisor from defined sets of option modules (which may be from more than one department) to achieve a coherent collection of modules that are most appropriate to their individual circumstances.

5.5   The procedures for the assessment of the integrated studies year are as set out under the Postgraduate Taught [Progression and] Award Regulations.

5.6   Faculties/Schools will schedule the delivery of taught and research components as appropriate. The research element should be integral from the start of registration, and run in parallel with the delivery of taught-based training throughout the integrated studies year.

5.7   When undertaking the taught element, PGRs registered on an iPhD are entitled to access the same learning support as taught postgraduate students.

5.8   Departments should specify what tailored support they will provide for PGRs registered on an iPhD to help them with research modules. This provision should be separate/in addition to that provided to postgraduate taught students for their dissertation.

PhD research project

5.9   The duration of the PhD research project is up to four years (or part-time equivalent).

5.10   The format and word length of the PhD thesis should be the same as the equivalent non-Integrated PhD programme in the department.

5.11   The final examination for an iPhD follows the rules set out for research degrees in Regulation 23 and the PoRD.

6.   **Supervision**

6.1   The supervision requirements for an iPhD PGR are as per the PoRD. With respect to the appointment of the main supervisor, there are two options:

   i.   the main supervisor(s) is appointed at the start of the iPhD and continues to the end of the PGR's registration;
   ii. a provisional main supervisor (who might be the nominated programme leader) is appointed at the start of the iPhD, with the appointment of the confirmed main supervisor by the end of the integrated studies year at the latest.

6.2   During the integrated studies year, PGRs registered on an iPhD should meet regularly with their main supervisor (confirmed or provisional) including formal supervision meetings at least every month as set out in Regulation 23,the PoRD and the Attendance, Engagement and Absence Policy.

7.   **Monitoring and progression**

Progression from the integrated studies year

7.1   Progression from year one to year two (or part-time equivalent) of an iPhD is dependent on passing 180 credits from the integrated studies year in accordance with the standard postgraduate taught programme rules of assessment (including the rules on compensation, reassessment and eligibility for merit or distinction). A department may make a case for setting the threshold for progression above a pass when seeking approval for the iPhD programme, e.g. that PGRs must obtain a merit or above, but if so there must be a clear academic rationale (e.g. that this is the standard expected of PGRs progressing to a PhD from the department's own Master's programmes). If setting the progression threshold above a pass, any permitted exceptions to this rule (e.g. if a PGR produces an exceptional research proposal/literature review and project) must be clearly outlined from the outset.

7.2   PGRs registered on an iPhD who meet the above requirements will progress to the second year of the iPhD. Those who do not meet the above requirements will have their registration on the iPhD terminated, but may be eligible for an exit award (see 4.14-4.17 of this Framework).

7.3   Progression from year one to year two of an iPhD, including any resits of taught modules and/or resubmission of the research element, will be ratified by examination Boards that overlap into the second year (full-time) of study. As such, the early months of the second year are effectively provisional registration, and subject to the ratification of module results from the integrated studies year. The amount of credit permitted to be compensated will follow that defined in the standard PGT Regulations, noting that failure of a 90 credit Research Project would necessitate a full retake of that module and its ratification at the next full examination Board in the following academic year, before progression to the research element could be permitted. In such cases, an enforced intermission is likely to be required between re-completion of the module, and ratification by the full examination Board, which may have implications of individual PGRs' funding and/or visa sponsorship.

Progression post integrated studies year

7.4   Progression during subsequent years of an iPhD follows the rules for the Formal Progression Reviews under Regulation 23 and the Procedures on Research Degrees.

8.   PGR representation and engagement

8.1   PGRs registered on an iPhD should be included in departmental, Faculty/School and University mechanisms for PGR representation and engagement, as per other PGRs.

9.   Quality assurance

9.1   Faculties/Schools should monitor the progress of, and outcomes for, PGRs registered on an iPhD. The effectiveness of iPhDs should be specifically considered as part of the standard periodic review processes applied to both taught and research degrees.

10.   Management of iPhDs

10.1   Each iPhD (or suite of related programmes) should have a nominated programme leader who is responsible for overseeing the provision, particularly the integrated studies year. It may be appropriate for the programme leader to serve as a provisional supervisor for PGRs.

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Appendix 5: Framework for Collaborative Research Degrees

1.   Introduction

1.1   The Framework for Collaborative Research Degrees ('Framework') sets out the parameters for considering and entering into arrangements between the University of Sussex and any other Higher Education Institution(s) (HEI) that leads to the award of a research degree. Other types of collaboration, including collaborations with industry, are addressed in the Procedures on Research Degrees (PoRD).

1.2   This Framework has been drawn up with reference to the Quality Assurance Agency's 'Exploring current best practice in the UK in the development of collaborative doctoral degrees' guidance (2023). It should be read in conjunction with both University of Sussex's Regulation 23 and the PoRD. The Postgraduate Researcher Sub-Committee (PGRSC) is responsible for implementing the Framework and for reviewing it annually.

1.3   Any new Collaborative Research Degree (Single, Joint or Double) arrangement (both the agreement and any associated proposal for a new research degree) will need to support the strategic aims of the University of Sussex. Senate approval for proceeding with a new arrangement will need to be sought, through the PGRSC.

1.4   Any new Collaborative Research Degree (Single, Joint or Double) arrangement will need to comply with UK Government guidelines concerning international research collaborations. Government advice may need to be sought via the relevant advisory group, noting that any advice may limit or entirely remove the feasibility of entering into an agreement.

1.5   Both the agreement and any associated proposal for a new research degree relating to a new Collaborative Research Degree arrangement (Single, Joint or Double), require the approval of the PGRSC, as do amendments to existing Collaborative Research Degrees arrangements; permissions required for other types of collaboration are detailed in the PoRD. Any arrangement which includes TNE (PGR) partners will also need approval via the University's TNE governance process through the Global and Civic Engagement Board.

1.6   Should the provision require an update to the University's license to sponsor international students, this must be fully approved and in place prior to the registration of any postgraduate researcher (PGR).

1.7   Noting the definitions in section 1.9, the remainder of this Framework focuses on Joint and Double Degrees; Single Degrees awarded by Sussex must be in accordance with Regulation 23 and the PoRD. However, the Framework may nevertheless provide a useful tool when considering and entering into collaborative arrangements leading to a Single Degree from Sussex, particularly where split- or off-site arrangements are being proposed; the institutional considerations and 'red lines' laid out below will be as applicable in such arrangements as in collaborations leading to a Joint or Double Degree.

1.8   Any exceptions to this Framework, to the PoRD, or to Regulation 23, requires the approval of the PGRSC. Exceptions will only be considered where there is a clear justification, and where the changes are academically appropriate.

Scope

1.9   To ensure clarity, the following definitions are used consistently at Sussex in relation to its exploration and negotiation of Collaborative Research Degrees. It is critical that a shared

understanding of terminology usage is established at the outset of any discussion with a partner:

Term	Definition
Overarching terms	
Collaborative Research Degrees	A formal partnership with another HEI that enables PGR registration at both HEIs with the intended outcome being a research degree award from Sussex (whether on a Joint or Double basis; see below).
Transnational Education for Research Degrees (TNE (PGR))	As above, but specifically refers to instances where one or more of the partner HEIs is based outside the UK.
Award outcomes	
Single Degree	Where a single degree is awarded, with a degree certificate naming and endorsed by only one partner.
Joint Degree	Where a single degree is awarded, with a degree certificate naming and endorsed by all partner HEIs.
Double Degree	Where each partner HEI awards the same degree outcome independently, resulting in a degree and certificate from each HEI.
Attendance arrangements	
Split-site	Where an arrangement requires the PGRs to attend two (or more) partner HEIs during the course of their registration.
Off-site	Where an arrangement requires the PGRs to attend a partner HEI for the entirety or majority of their registration.

1.10   This Framework applies to any agreement entered into with the intention to award:

i.   A Joint Research Degree;
ii. A Double Research Degree.

Partners

1.11   The rationale for proposing an agreement for a joint or double research degree must be clearly stated from the outset. The basis for such an agreement would normally include developing or strengthening existing links with strategic partners. The sustainability of the partnership must be established and will be considered as a factor in the approval process.

1.12   In all cases, partner HEIs are expected to support PGR-level study at their own institutions and have degree-awarding powers in their own right. Partners must be of good academic standing, and more broadly be of good financial and governance standing. A partner HEI is expected to have clearly documented quality assurance processes that are, as a minimum, comparable standards to the University of Sussex.

1.13   Where there are off-site or split-site arrangements, Sussex Faculty/School(s) are responsible for checking that the partner HEI(s) is(are) able to provide the required research facilities (e.g. laboratories, libraries, computing facilities, specialist equipment, desk space) for the relevant discipline(s) and that these are of a suitable standard.

Governance

1.14   All appropriate agreements must be fully signed before recruitment is undertaken.

2.   Criteria for developing a Joint or Double Research Degree

2.1   In undertaking any Collaborative Research Degree, maintaining the reputation of the University of Sussex and the integrity of the PGR award must be assured.

2.2   The bringing together of regulations that govern the awarding of PhD and/or MPhil degrees at the University of Sussex and another HEI (whether UK or non-UK based) will be a complex undertaking.

2.3   There are points where no variation to the existing University of Sussex Regulation 23 or PoRD can be made. These are institutional 'red lines' and will make progressing an agreement impossible. These red lines are laid out as follows:

Area	Sussex position	Risk to Institution
Examination	As per UK conventions, the oral examination (*viva voce* or 'viva') must be held in closed conditions with two examiners, appointed as experts in their field. Requirements as per Regulation 23 and the PoRD.	Represents a risk as Sussex is a UK-based research degree awarding institution.
Language of thesis	The thesis must be in English, as per Regulation 23 and the PoRD. Word length is determined at the Faculty/School level, as per the PoRD.	Represents a risk because Sussex is a UK-based research degree awarding institution. Also, UKVI English language requirements render this a potential compliance risk.
Duration of study, particularly the maximum period of registration	The minimum and maximum length of registration (both full- and part-time), as per Regulation 23 and the PoRD.	Risk to the PGR experience: equity, feasibility, wellbeing.
Governance of Research Ethics	As per the framework for research governance and ethics review processes (requirements) and the PoRD (responsibilities and timings).	Reputational risk and risk to quality assurance.
Mandatory training	As defined under the PoRD.	Reputational risks and potential compliance risks (e.g. with funders).
Admission requirements	The expected academic background and educational attainment for entry as per Regulation 23 and the PoRD.	Reputational risks in the form of risks to completion rates.
English Language Proficiency	The Standard English Language Test (SELT) expectation is set to ensure PGRs can engage fully in their research from the start. It is also a requirement that a minimum standard be evidenced by international applicants requiring a Student visa to study.	Reputational risks (e.g. completion rates) and UKVI-related risks. Also risks to the PGR experience and to completion rates if PGRs are admitted on the basis of insufficient English Language competency.

Agreement for Data Sharing	An agreement about the sharing of data must be in place and be compliant with GDPR regulations, Regulation 23 and PoRD.	Reputational risk in the form of contravening UK GDPR laws.
Minimum number of PGR registrations over the period of the agreement	The minimum number of PGR registrations normally expected to result from any one agreement would be ten over the period of the agreement.	Financial and resource risks.

2.4 The table below follows the PGR journey and identifies all points of risk that need to be discussed and addressed in full in the collaboration agreement. Some areas will require more complex discussions than others. See the above table for any points identified as 'red line':

Process	Sussex position	High Risk to Institution
Agreement for Data Sharing	An agreement about the sharing of data must be in place and be compliant with GDPR regulations, Regulation 23 and PoRD.	Red Line
Intellectual Property	Sussex's position regarding Intellectual Property (IP) is stated in the PoRD.	A clear understanding of expectations relating to where IP sits must be established. If this varies from the established Sussex position, this must not disadvantage either the PGR or Sussex.
Governance of Research Ethics	As per the framework for research governance and ethics review processes (requirements) and the PoRD (responsibilities and timings).	Red Line
Admission requirements	The expected academic background and educational attainment for entry as per Regulation 23 and the PoRD.	Red Line
English Language Proficiency	The Standard English Language Test (SELT) expectation is set as an admission requirement to ensure PGRs can engage fully in their research from the start. It is also an admission requirement that a minimum standard be evidenced by international PGRs requiring a Student visa to study.	Red Line
References – number, who can provide them, period of validity	A minimum of two (normally academic) references are required by Sussex. These are expected to be from the applicant's current/most recent educational institution, and to	Potential reputational risk; potential risk to UKVI sponsor compliance; potential risk to ensuring the excellence of academic standards.

	comment on the applicant's ability to cope with the academic demands of their chosen programme. Overseas applicants currently studying in the UK must provide a UK reference.	
UKVI Student visa: Mobility expectations/ periods spent at each host	Sponsorship of non-domicile/non-standard PGR route students are determined by UKVI requirements; the institution which has issued the CAS to the student retains responsibility for the PGR's compliance with UKVI requirements.	Potential institutional risk as a Student route visa sponsor.
Duration of study, particularly the maximum period of registration	The minimum and maximum length of registration (both full- and part-time) should align with those stated in Regulation 23 and the PoRD.	Red Line
Registration	Clarification is needed if the PGR is concurrently registered at two institutions. Registration must include a full registration at Sussex for an award to include Sussex on the outcome degree (and certificate). 'Shadow records' may be required at partner HEIs to facilitate administrative processes and PGR access to resources, etc. It is potentially onerous for PGRs to maintain two registrations and the annual re-registration process will need to be clarified.	Represents a risk to the PGR experience.
Supervisory arrangements including mandatory supervisor training	Supervisory arrangements must be agreed/formalised. Mandatory training requirements at Sussex as stated in the PoRD.	Potential for institutional risk including completion rates and academic rigour.
Language of thesis	The thesis must be in English, as per Regulation 23 and the PoRD. Word length is determined at the Faculty/School level.	Red Line
Progression Reviews	Form/frequency/and nature of these – how rigorous, who assesses/approves progression, how non-progression is handled, how many attempts to re-apply for progression are permitted. Sussex requirements are stated in the PoRD.	Potential reputational risk; potential risk to the PGR experience.

Mandatory training	As defined under the PoRD. Consideration should also be given to whether additional external training should be undertaken (e.g. HEECA training).	Red Line
Researcher development	Where training is compulsory, please see section above. Other development opportunities/ placements/internships need to be explored from the outset, with an understanding of any mobility expectations that might arise.	Represents a risk to the PGR experience and potential risk (placement/internship opportunities) to UKVI sponsorship compliance.
Resources (including facilities, desk space, IT, etc.)	Clarification of expectations pertaining to access to facilities in Faculties/Schools (or equivalent structures), especially in relation to lab-based research. Any investment required (at Sussex) and any chargeable bench fees.	Represents a risk to the PGR experience and to the feasibility of undertaking research in some areas.
PGR fees	Clarification about what fees will be due, to cover what period, and payable by whom: • Will there be a fee waiver at all HEIs, or will the PGR be liable for some/all fees? • Standard fees will apply unless otherwise agreed as part of the process. Where agreed, any fee waivers and/or additional reasonable costs that the PGR would be expected to incur must be borne by the receiving Faculty/School.	Represents both a risk to the PGR experience, and a potential financial risk to the University.
Thesis submission including publication expectations as part of submission	The form of the submission (i.e. mode of submission, formatting, etc.) and any pre-submission checks or requirements; Sussex requirements as per the PoRD. The requirement to have publication(s) as part of the overall thesis submission is not the norm in the UK and is unlikely to become a prerequisite for award. There is a distinct route for PhD by Published Works at Sussex.	Potential institutional risk, undermining the quality of submissions and academic integrity.
Examination	As per UK conventions, the oral examination (*viva voce* or 'viva') must	Red Line

	be held in closed conditions with two examiners, appointed as experts in their field. Requirements as per Regulation 23 and the PoRD.	
Special Consideration, Reasonable Adjustment and Disabled Student Allowance (DSA) (or equivalent)	Clarity on how special consideration, reasonable adjustment and/or access to DSA (or equivalent) processes will flow, including which HEI will lead. Of particular consideration is how communications between HEIs will be arranged to ensure the PGR is not disadvantaged.	Represents a risk to the PGR experience.
Appeals process	Clarity on how the appeal process will flow, including which HEI will lead, and where a PGR registered on the programme should begin the process, is essential and needs to be detailed in the agreement. How potential disagreements in outcome between institutions will be resolved, and the possible escalation route(s) for PGRs who are dissatisfied with an outcome (i.e. to the OIAHE), should also be considered.	Represents a risk to the PGR experience.
Complaints process	Clarity on how the complaints process will flow, including which HEI will lead, and where a PGR registered on the programme should begin the process, is essential and needs to be detailed in the agreement. How potential disagreements in outcome between institutions will be resolved, and the possible escalation route(s) for PGRs who are dissatisfied with an outcome (*i.e.* to the OIAHE), should also be considered.	Represents a risk to the PGR experience.
Minimum number of PGR registrations over the period of the agreement	The minimum number of PGR registrations normally expected to result from any one agreement would be ten over the period of the agreement.	Red Line

3.   **Programme details**

Duration

3.1   The period of registration for a PGR on a joint or double research degree will be as per Regulation 23 and the PoRD, unless otherwise agreed during the development and approval of the collaboration agreement.

Naming convention and final award

3.2   In the case of a joint research degree, a PGR who successfully completes the programme will be awarded a PhD in XXXX (their subject) jointly from Sussex and each partner HEI.

3.3   In the case of a double research degree, a PGR who successfully completes the programme will be awarded a PhD in XXXX (their subject) separately by Sussex and each partner HEI.

3.4   Responsibilities for the issuance of certificates of attendance, transcripts, or similar, must be agreed during the development of the agreement governing the collaboration.

Oversight and Quality Assurance

3.5   In the case of both joint and double research degrees, an academic from the lead Faculty/School at Sussex should be nominated to coordinate the provision and oversee the relationship with the partner.

3.6   Faculties/Schools should monitor the progress of, and outcomes for, joint and double research degrees, in the same way they monitor Sussex-only provision.

3.7   The effectiveness of joint and double research degrees (with a particular focus on the research environment being provided) should be reported on annually via the PGRSC, and specifically considered as part of Periodic Review processes, where relevant. The University may also wish, on occasion, to conduct a more in-depth review of joint and double research degree provision.

3.8   Ongoing relationships (and any associated Memoranda of Understanding, overarching cohort agreements/partner-specific template individual PGR agreements) should be subject to regular review (normally on a five-year cycle and reported to the PGRSC) to ensure that the relationship is working well and that the partner continues to be in good standing, academically, financially and in terms of governance.

Data sharing and initial intellectual property (IP)

3.9   A data sharing agreement must be in place between Sussex and all partner HEIs prior to the recruitment of any PGRs.

3.10   Where relevant, UK Government requirements concerning export controls for academic research must be adhered to.

3.11   Intellectual property arrangements must be agreed prior to the recruitment of any PGRs and form part of the collaboration agreement.

PGR status and registration

3.12   In variance to the PoRD, registration on a joint or double research degree is likely to necessitate multiple PhD registrations across the partner institutions (these may be full registrations or involve shadow records). While this is accepted, the details of any such arrangement must be negotiated as part of the collaboration agreement. In all cases, multiple registrations will not bestow any rights to an award from Sussex or any partner HEI beyond the terms of the collaboration agreement.

3.13   The admission requirements (academic and English language) for a joint or double research degree are the same as those for the equivalent Sussex-only research degree, unless otherwise expressly agreed under the terms of the collaboration agreement.

3.14   The shared involvement of the partner HEI(s) in admissions decisions must be explicitly discussed and agreed, and form part of the collaboration agreement (noting the above requirement for a data agreement to be in place prior to recruitment commencing).

3.15   PGR costs (e.g. for visas, travel and accommodation to meet engagement and in-person supervision requirements) associated with participation in a joint or double research degree (whether on-site, split-site, or off-site) must be clearly stated.

Information

3.16   PGRs on a joint or double research degree should be provided, by their Faculty/School, with clear written information about the programme arrangements in a handbook for the research degree. The same expectation extends to partner HEIs, and collaborating institutions should seek to achieve alignment in the information conveyed to PGRs.

3.17   Attendance at institutional and Faculty-/School-level induction activities should be negotiated as part of the collaboration agreement. As a minimum, PGRs should be expected to attend the central and Faculty/School (or equivalent structure) based induction at the institution at which they will spend the majority of their time. In the case of split-site arrangements, it is strongly recommended that PGRs are required to attend the same at any other partner institutions at which they will be spending time.

Attendance requirements

3.18   Attendance expectations for the PGR at each HEI must be agreed and detailed in the collaboration agreement. Split-site agreements will normally limit attendance away from Sussex and, unless specifically addressed in the agreement, will align with the PoRD.

3.19   International PGRs subject to UKVI restrictions will be required to apply for an appropriate Student visa to meet attendance requirements. The timing of programme attendance requirements will need to be designed with visa restrictions in mind and any variations will require discussion and documented approval from the University of Sussex UKVI Visa Compliance team. It is the PGR's responsibility to apply for visas and meet visa requirements.

3.20   It is the responsibility of the PGR (or their funder) to organise and fund any trips (e.g. travel, accommodation and visas) that they need to undertake to meet attendance requirements or for in-person supervision meetings (see below).

Engagement and Supervision

3.21   The default expectation for PGR engagement (i.e. with formal supervision) will align with the PoRD and the [Attendance, Engagement and Absence Policy](.).

3.22   At least two supervisors must be appointed as per the PoRD (number, eligibility, etc.) and, unless otherwise agreed and approved by the PGRSC as part of the collaboration agreement, the default will be for these to be Sussex-based.

3.23   The details of the role of the partner HEI(s) in co-supervising PGRs should be agreed in advance of PGR recruitment and set out in the collaboration agreement.

3.24   How any changes to the supervisory team will be handled should be agreed and set out in the collaboration agreement. Unless otherwise agreed and approved by the PGRSC as part of that, the default will be for changes to be handled as per the PoRD.

3.25   Supervision should be conducted in accordance with the PoRD, unless otherwise agreed under the terms of the collaboration agreement.

3.26   In the case of split-site and off-site arrangements, supervision meetings with the Sussex-based supervisors may take place via videoconferencing.

3.27   In the case of off-site arrangements, consideration should be given as to whether any collaboration agreement should require any in-person contact with the Sussex-based supervisor(s) and/or whether the Sussex based supervisor(s) is expected to visit their PGR(s) at the partner institutions during the course of the research degree.

Formal progression reviews

3.28   The requirements for Formal Progression Reviews should be as per the PoRD, unless otherwise agreed and approved by the PGRSC as part of the collaboration agreement.

3.29   In the case of split-site and off-site arrangements, Formal Progression Review meetings may take place by video-conferencing without additional permissions, unless they coincide with a PGR visiting Sussex.

Training and development

3.30   PGRs on joint and double research degrees must undertake any mandatory training as stipulated in the PoRD, regardless of the format of the registration (on-campus, split-site, or off-site). Similarly, PGRs must undertake any mandatory training as required by the partner HEI(s). Where mandatory training is duplicated across the partner institutions, the collaboration agreement should make clear which institution's training must be completed in each instance. In all cases, training requirements should be made clear in the PGR handbook for the collaboration.

3.31   Research and transferable skills training and support for professional development may be provided by Sussex, by the partner HEI(s), or a combination of the two. Discussion about training provision and access should be detailed in the collaboration agreement.

3.32   In the case off split-site and off-site arrangements, all partner institutions should take proactive steps to make their training accessible to, and appropriate for, PGRs based elsewhere during their registration. This might include facilitating remote participation in training sessions, modifying and recording training sessions for asynchronous engagement, or developing interactive online resources.

Access to facilities and resources

3.33   PGRs' access to facilities and resources at Sussex and its partner HEI(s) should be set out in the collaboration agreement and detailed in the PGR handbook for the collaboration.

3.34   Access to institutional funding opportunities (e.g. conference funding) should be set out in the collaboration agreement and detailed in the PGR handbook for the collaboration.

Examination

3.35   The examination process for both joint and double research degrees must include a closed viva as per the requirements of the PoRD. Where a partner HEI also requires a public defence, this must occur after the closed viva. The specifics of the examination process must be agreed from the outset and detailed in the collaboration agreement; a collaboration cannot proceed if agreement cannot be reached on the details of the examination process.

3.36   Examination outcomes (and any subsequent re-examination process) must follow the requirements laid out in the PoRD. Any deviation must be agreed from the outset and detailed in the collaboration agreement.

Transfers

3.37   The availability (or not) of transfers into and out of joint and double research degrees (e.g. to the single-institution equivalent of the research degree) must be detailed in the collaboration agreement. Consideration should be given to the academic appropriateness of transfers, to UKVI restrictions, and to any funding restrictions. Where transfers are permitted, the process and approvals required must be included in the collaboration agreement.

3.38   In the case of transfers out, these will not normally be able to be reversed (e.g. if the PGR changes their mind) and the PGR will default to equivalent single-institution programme at their chosen institution, and thus to the regulations, policies and procedures of that HEI.

PGR representation and engagement

3.39   PGRs on joint and double research degrees should be included in the Faculty/School (or equivalent structure) and institutional mechanisms for PGR representation and engagement across the partnership, acknowledging that reasonable adjustments may need to be made to facilitate their participation when located at the partner.

Academic and Non-Academic Appeals

3.40   Any joint or double research degree agreement must detail how academic or other types of appeal, special considerations, academic/research misconduct or reasonable adjustment will be processed across the partnership. The default will be to follow the Sussex PGR process as detailed in the PoRD and other relevant policies or procedures, but it is likely that an enhanced process will be required to detail the partner responsibilities in this.

Complaints

3.41   Any joint or double research degree agreement must detail how complaints will be processed across the partnership. The default will be to follow the Sussex PGR process as detailed in the PoRD and other relevant policies or procedures, but it is likely that an enhanced process will be required to detail the partner responsibilities in this.

Review / Contacts / References	
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	Degrees
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Appendix 6: Statement on the Use of Generative AI by Postgraduate Researchers

1. Introduction

1.1 Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools are software applications (which may include websites) that generate content in any form based on the prompt entered by the user. Indicative examples include Large Language Modules (LLMs) such as (but not limited to) OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google Bard/Gemini and Microsoft's Bing Chat/Copilot.

1.2 GenAI tools are developing at pace. The University of Sussex's position is to support postgraduate researchers (PGRs) to develop the wide-ranging skills they need to successfully complete their degree and to be equipped for their future career paths. This includes understanding and upholding academic and research integrity and the ethical use of all resources, including GenAI tools.

1.3 It is the responsibility of everyone individually to uphold the highest standards of academic and research integrity, ethics and governance, as laid out in the University's Code of Practice for Research.

1.4 There are clearly identifiable opportunities to employing GenAI tools, to be creative, curious and original; the choice to use these tools must be governed by an understanding of the significant risks that exist with GenAI tools, as laid out in section 4.

1.5 When considering whether to use GenAI tools, PGRs (and their supervisors) should consider the ethical implications, including:

    (i) As noted on Staff Hub, some GenAI tools have been refined using human labour, which can be exploitative and damaging[3].

    (ii) Noting Sussex's commitment to sustainable research, the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice, PGRs may wish to bear in mind that all of the technologies stated in section 2 – if run on cloud servers – use very large amounts of energy and water compared to traditional digital tools[4,5].

    (iii) The perpetuation of biases is discussed in section 4.2.iv.

    (iv) The implications for intellectual property are noted in section 4.2.v.

2. Definitions

2.1 To ensure clarity, the following definitions apply at Sussex in relation to Generative AI in the PGR environment:

    (i) AI: Artificial Intelligence

    (ii) Generative AI: a type of AI technology with the ability to generate new content. The user can enter a prompt (this can be text based, images, designs, music, etc.) and the technology will return a response. This is often shortened to GenAI.

        • GenAI cannot generate 'novel' idea, but it can generate 'new' content. This effectively translates to being able to find new ways to put existing content, drawn

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[3] *https://time.com/6247678/openai-chatgpt-kenya-workers/ NOTE: this article contains references to and descriptions of sexual abuse. [Accessed 14 February 2025]*

[4] *https://dl.acm.org/doi/10.1145/3630106.3658542 [Accessed 05 December 2024]*

[5] *https://www.thetimes.com/uk/technology-uk/article/thirsty-chatgpt-uses-four-times-more-water-than-previously-thought-bc0pqswdr [Accessed 05 December 2024]*

indiscriminately from across internet sources, together to create something new, but it is unable to have a truly novel idea of its own.

- GenAI tools work on the basis of probabilities and predictions, and do not actually understand the needs, expectations, or views of the individual user.

(iii)   Algorithm: a process or set of rules to be followed in calculations or other problem-solving operations, especially by a computer.

(iv)   Machine learning: algorithms which are trained to build models of large data sets, spot patterns and apply them to new data.

(v)   Neural network: a type of model used in machine learning which is inspired by the way the human brain works

(vi)   LLM: Large language model. Many GenAI tools are based on LLMs. These are neural networks which have been trained on very large amounts of text (typically sourced from the Internet) to make predictions about what words are most likely to occur in a given context.

(vii)   GPT: generative pre-trained transformer. This is a family of LLMs which are based on transformers (a type of neural network architecture which are good at working out what to pay attention to in the input), are pre-trained on a very large amount of data and can generate new content.

3. Guiding Principles on the use of GenAI tools

3.1   These principles should inform all practice.

3.2   PGRs and their supervisors should explore disciplinary-specific acceptable uses of GenAI in discursive ways, where possible, to help improve general understanding of its capabilities, functionalities, limitations and problems/biases.

3.3   Any use of the technology in either an assessment or any other context should always be declared and evaluated/reflected on and, if necessary, cited and referenced. Citations and references to GenAI outputs should follow the same process as if referencing or citing personal correspondence (i.e. material which is not publicly accessible), and both the original prompt and the full output should be included (e.g. in a footnote).

3.4   The technology is used to support, not substitute, original thought, independent research, and the production of original work.

3.5   PGRs belong in a community of academic, professional service and fellow PGRs. This community depends on an ethos of trustworthiness and respect for all constituents.

3.6   The principles of good academic practice (see 5.1) including personal and academic honesty and integrity are maintained.

3.7   Fairness is knowing that the outcome awarded for a summative assessment is truly earned on the basis of the work done by the PGR. A summative assessment is an assessment that counts towards an award or a progression decision. For a PGR this includes the Formal Progress Review process, the thesis submission and the oral examination ('viva').

4. Risks arising from using GenAI tools

4.1   GenAI can and frequently does get things wrong. The onus is on the user to ensure that if the tools are used, the content produced is accurate and true, that the tools are used ethically, and that measures have been taken to ensure the privacy and integrity of the work.

4.2   The list below compiles common concerns that must be taken into consideration when using GenAI tools:

(i)   *GenAI tools can be wrong:* They may produce outputs that are incorrect or nonsensical. GenAI tools do not differentiate right from wrong and will present outputs as equally valid and true. How a query or prompt is framed by the user may affect the quality, clarity and usefulness of the output.

(ii)   *GenAI tools can make things up:* They may produce outputs that include 'hallucinations' - information (e.g. references, data, etc.) that is made up by the GenAI platform. This may include making up false references to non-existent texts, and while these may look authentic, further searches by the user will identify that these do not exist. This includes GenAI summaries and notetakers, which can insert words or information which were not in the original source.

(iii) *GenAI tools are unreliable:* It is not possible to assess the completeness of, or if the most reliable and relevant resources were used in, any output from GenAI tools because:

- They do not identify where key information may be missing or where information may be outdated;
- They can provide different answers to the same or similar input;
- They cannot access information held behind a paywall. For example, where university libraries subscribe to access collections of academic texts, GenAI tools are not able reproduce information held in these resources.

(iv)   *GenAI tools can exhibit bias:* They may produce outputs that reflect and amplify biases and stereotypes and may be weighted towards Western perspectives. They do not have the ability to be rational or to understand complexities around information sources, and do not recognise inaccurate or offensive statements, or assess validity or accuracy.

(v)   *GenAI tools can ignore intellectual property rights and privacy:* They may produce outputs that ignore intellectual property rights, for example by producing content that does not include appropriate acknowledgement or breaches copyright. Uploading articles, books or other materials into a GenAI tool may also contravene the terms of use set by the rights holder or publisher.

4.3   PGRs should exercise great care in putting their work or data into GenAI tools. Exposing ideas, research, data or those of others to a GenAI tool may compromise confidentiality, GDPR[6], their research data management plan[7] and/or ethical approval (including but not limited to that for processing data)[8]. It is important to note that, once work or data is put into a GenAI tool, it cannot be deleted and – depending on the terms of service – may be used for training AI models and/or informing responses to other users.

5.   Good Academic Practice and acceptable uses of GenAI tools

5.1   Good academic practice is understood to mean the process whereby academic work is completed independently and honestly, using good referencing and acknowledging all sources. Examples of good academic practice include:

- Developing independent evaluation of academic matters

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[6] *See https://www.sussex.ac.uk/ogs/policies/information/dpa*
[7] *See https://www.sussex.ac.uk/library/researchdatamanagement/policies. Note that data entered into a GenAI tool will be uploaded to a server; this may affect your data management plan, depending on the location and consequent jurisdiction of that server.*
[8] *See https://www.sussex.ac.uk/staff/research/governance*

- Drawing research from academics in relevant fields of study
- Discussing and evaluating existing concepts and theories
- Demonstrating understanding of key literature
- Developing arguments with an independent voice.

5.2   The use of GenAI tools for preparatory research work is considered acceptable practice. However, given all the concerns noted above (4.2), such tools should never be the only source of information used. It may be helpful for PGRs to consider GenAI tools in a similar light to Wikipedia: as a source of information, but not always a reliable one.

5.3   PGRs must use academic and trusted disciplinary-specific sources when developing their work.

5.4   While GenAI tools are not academic sources, the content generated should nevertheless be cited appropriately when submitted as part of an assessed piece of work or publication (see 3.3).

5.5   GenAI tools can be used to help ideation and/or the collation of information to assist with being in a better position to write a section in the thesis, or a progression review document.

6.   Unacceptable uses of GenAI tools

6.1   A PGR must not use GenAI tools to circumvent the requirements of a summative assessment or use it to create all or a substantial part of a summative assessment (see 3.7) that they then disguise as their own, original work. The requirement to declare, cite, reference and reflect on the use of GenAI tools is intended to prevent PGRs from simply using the technology to create assessments that they then claim as their own, and a PGR that refuses to declare how they have used the technology, does not cite it, reference it or reflect on its outputs may be attempting to hide the fact that the work is not their own. This may result in the PGR being in breach of research integrity and subject to The Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Research Misconduct (see section 7. below).

6.2   Some examples of misuse of GenAI tools may include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- A PGR generating all or a substantial part of a summative assessment and passing it off as their own work.
- Submitting content generated by GenAI tools without appropriate acknowledgement and citation of the source(s);
- Using tools which paraphrase text to pass off the work of another person (including that of another PGR), organisation, or content generated by artificial intelligence, as the PGR's own;
- Using manual or machine translation to translate the work of another person (including that of another PGR) or organisation originally developed in a language other than English without appropriate and correctly presented acknowledgement and citation of the original source;
- Submitting assessed work where the use of GenAI tools has been cited, but the prompt given is in contravention of good academic practice (see 5.1)
- Uploading any data generated from empirical research projects in contravention of ethical approval conditions and/or the Data Protection Act (2018).

7.   Research Misconduct and Poor Academic Practice

7.1   PGRs are advised to refer to The Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Research Misconduct for further information.

7.2   The work of a PGR who has based this purely on the output generated by GenAI tools, where no other sources of information have been consulted is unlikely to:

- be completely accurate;
- have the sufficient depth of understanding and critique required for a research degree award.

7.3   PGRs are encouraged to go directly to academic and discipline-specific sources. GenAI tools might have misinterpreted or misrepresented information which will result in a PGR importing errors into their work.

7.4   Engaging with academic and discipline-specific sources allows PGRs to develop their own thoughts and ideas in the context of established scholarship. PGRs who do not do this are unlikely to pass summative assessments (see 3.7).

7.5   Summative assessments are an important part of learning and PGRs who do not complete these appropriately risk not only delaying the progress of their thesis, but also not having the necessary skills required by employers when they leave.

8.   Guidance for supervisors

8.1   The guidance below is intended to be indicative of good practice and is not exhaustive. There will be disciplinary variations to be considered and wise judgement and ensuring academic integrity is upheld are the responsibility of the PGR as well as the supervisors.

8.2   Supervisors are encouraged to:

(i)   make clear that GenAI tools cannot replace the PGR's own insight, expertise or academic scholarship;

(ii)   remind PGRs that any work submitted at supervisory meeting, for Formal Progression Reviews, and for the final thesis submission and oral examination, should result from their own thought processes, workings, analysis, and critique, using a variety of sources;

(iii)   allow space in supervisory meetings for PGRs to discuss and query the use of the GenAI tools they encounter, their reliability and their suitability for their area of research;

(iv)   emphasise that PGRs should question the validity and accuracy of any output, data, results and information received from GenAI tools;

(v)   be aware of how research-focussed GenAI tools are advertised: they often promise time-management and efficiency benefits. Discussion early in the supervisory relationship to set expectations around time management and work rate should encourage PGRs not to resort to utilising such tools;

(vi)   remind PGRs that they should not upload any of their work, data, results, discussion, reports, etc, into any GenAI tool;

(vii)   remind PGRs that GenAI tools should not be used to conduct research or investigations into a topic, except where GenAI tools are the subject of the research;

(viii)   keep up to date with the Sussex's guidelines and information around academic integrity and GenAI use, and to remind PGRs to do the same.

8.3   Supervisors are advised against:

(i)   closing down discussions with PGRs about the use of GenAI. A PGR using GenAI tools may be an indication of specific difficulties (analysing articles, structuring work, writing in a second language) which could be explored further in supervisory meetings. Further appropriate support could also be sign-posted as a result;

(ii)   assuming that PGRs fully understand the problems in the outputs, data, results and information received from GenAI tools. In a challenging research environment, a PGR may not clearly understand why the output from GenAI tools is poor or unreliable;

(iii)   assuming that PGRs understand that the way in which they undertake their research can be as valuable as the eventual output of the project.

9.   Guidance for examiners

9.1   Examiners nominated to undertake PGR examinations are appointed for their expertise and experience in their field. They are invited to examine the PGR and their thesis based on their knowledge and judgement and to consider a thesis submitted for examination in relation to the assessment criteria. They should examine theses and conduct oral examiners ('vivas') in line with the University's [Procedures on Research Degrees](#).

9.2   Examiners must not: use GenAI tools as part of their assessment activities; upload any part of the PGR's thesis into a GenAI tool; or make use of any external GenAI detection software when assessing the thesis.

9.3   Examiners with any concerns in relation to the use of GenAI by a PGR in a thesis submitted for examination should contact the Examinations and Assessment team at Sussex. Examiners should not discuss or share concerns with any other persons.

Review / Contacts / References	
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