

# CARDIFF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH DEGREES HANDBOOK: A CODE OF PRACTICE

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## CARDIFF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH DEGREES HANDBOOK

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 The partnership

Cardiff recognises that a research degree programme is a co-operative venture - a partnership in which the student, the sponsor (where appropriate), the supervisor and the school each has duties and responsibilities.

##### 1. The agreement

When a research student registers at the University, an agreement is established. As part of that agreement, the University expects:

- .1 that all research students will pursue their personal research goals with diligence, and will endeavour to present a completed thesis for examination by the end of the period of fee-paying registration;
- .2 that all supervisors will provide appropriate support and guidance to their students, and through expert advice and direction, will encourage them to achieve their research potential and assist them to submit a completed thesis for examination by the end of their period of fee-paying registration. This means, for example, that full-time PhD students should aim to submit within 3 years of initial registration;
- .3 that every Head of School will ensure that all research students:
  - receive adequate supervision and guidance, appropriate to their individual needs, in the pursuit of their research goals;

- are provided with skills training appropriate to their needs and those of their research programme;
- are provided with such accommodation, resources and ancillary support facilities that are necessary for the achievement of their research goals so as to ensure the quality of their output and the timeliness of their submissions.

The student and the University share a duty to see that public funds and sponsorship monies are properly spent. Failure to complete a planned programme of research or to submit a completed thesis in good time represents a waste of scarce resources and human effort, and detracts from the University's overall research aims.

### **1.3 The Code of Practice for Research Degrees**

This Code expresses the basic principles according to which the University requires its schools to conduct their research student business. It has been drawn up with particular reference to the QAA Code of Practice for the Assurance of Academic Quality and Standards in Higher Education: Section 1, Postgraduate Research Programmes (revised 2004).

The Code has also been designed to include or make explicit reference to information on relevant regulations and procedures to help students and staff through the University's requirements for a research degree.

The Code applies to all candidates for research degrees - including those studying on a part-time basis or for periods away from the University, and those studying for specialist research degree awards, such as the MD and professional doctorates. Some research programmes extend for just one year of registered study, and schools may adapt the provisions of the Code to ensure that students registered for such programmes are managed and supported effectively. For students who are registered for professional doctorate programmes, schools will wish to consider how best to match the requirements of the Code to the particular stages of the programme.

The term 'student' is used throughout, but for the purposes of this Code it also includes members of staff who are registered for higher research degrees.

## **2 THE RESEARCH DEGREE**

### **2.1 What is research?**

Definitions of research are many, and there will be significantly different emphases across disciplines. Nonetheless, with regard to the professional dimension that must accord research, the 'Research Governance Framework for Cardiff University', includes the following objectives:

- the deepening and broadening of knowledge and understanding by expert, responsible and professional means;
  - the training of new Researchers in appropriate methods and professional standards of research;
  - the dissemination of results through publication, teaching, applied research and consultancy;

- the promotion of interests and benefits of research.

Researchers should, in all aspects of their research:

- foster honesty and demonstrate integrity and professionalism;
- allow research methods and results to be open to scrutiny, discussion and debate;
- observe all legal and ethical requirements laid down by the University or other bodies properly laying down such requirements, as well as basic principles relating to ethics, information, finance and health and safety;
- acknowledge the roles and contributions of all collaborators;
- be committed to the careful, reflective process of discovery and interpretation.

All students engaged in research must familiarise themselves with the '[Research Governance Framework for Cardiff University](#)' and the '[Student Guide to Academic Integrity](#)' and ensure observance with the provisions they contain.

### 1. Availability of theses

A research degree thesis when submitted and successful is normally then openly available and subject to no security or restriction of access. Where, for reasons of commercial, clinical or other sensitivity, a bar on access cannot be avoided, normally they must

- be agreed at the outset
  - be approved by the Graduate Development Committee
  - not exceed 2 years.

Applications should be made in accordance with the University's '[Procedure for Applying for a Bar on Access to Research Degree Theses](#)' .

### 2.3 Types of research degree qualifications

Research students at Cardiff University are pursuing one of the following types of qualification aims:

#### .1 Doctoral level qualifications

- Doctor of Philosophy - PhD (including the Integrated PhD)
  - Doctor of Engineering (the Engineering Doctorate) - EngD
  - Professional Doctorate, such as:
    - Doctor of Education - EdD
    - Doctor of Social Work - DSW
    - Doctor of Health Studies - DHS
    - Doctor of Clinical Psychology - DCLinPsy
    - Doctor of Educational Psychology - DEdPsy
- Doctor of Medicine - MD
  - Master of Surgery - MCh

## *.2 Masters level qualifications*

- Master of Philosophy - MPhil
  - Master of Dental Science (by Research)

Some schools require their research students to register for 'MPhil/PhD'. This is a registration status that has the qualification aim of PhD but is used where the school wishes to especially emphasise to their students that there is a probationary period and a distinct progression point at which the decision is made whether to allow formal upgrade to the PhD programme.

All research students should note that there are formal procedures for reviewing their academic progress and performance, and for allowing progression to the next stage or year of the programme, regardless of initial registration status. (Refer to section 10 of this Code.)

## **2.4 Criteria for awards**

The criteria for the award of the degree qualifications listed above are provided in the relevant University's Senate Regulations. These describe the outcomes that must be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the examiners, when they are assessing the work, for the candidate to be eligible for the award of the particular degree.

### **1. Word limits and time limits**

Word limits and time limits are provided in the relevant University's Senate Regulations.

Undertaking a research project, especially at doctoral level, means that, perhaps for the first time, a student has the opportunity to work at his/her own pace, on a topic of his/her own choosing and/or development, and to make an independent contribution to knowledge.

As well as advancing the discipline, a thesis demonstrates that the research student possesses certain skills. In that sense, it might be the basis of future research, but, most importantly, it represents a distinct programme of study and research in its own right. It is essential to think in terms of a sharply defined project with clearly specified limits, which can be completed within the duration of the registered period. (Refer to section 6 of this Code.)

#### *.1 Word limits*

Students should seek advice from their school about the overall format and length of the thesis. In general terms, though, a thesis should be crisp, clear, concise and convincing.

#### *.2 Time limits*

Absolute time limits are calculated in calendar years from the date of a student's initial registration. A candidature will lapse unless a thesis is submitted within the prescribed time limit.

Where a student's candidature is adversely affected by unavoidable difficulties, the University may consider a case presented by the school concerned for an interruption to study or an extension to the time limit. The criteria are set down in the relevant University's Senate Regulations.

(Refer to Cardiff University's 'Procedure for Interruption to Study or Extension to Time Limit'.)

## **2.6 The research environment**

The University wishes to maximise the contribution each research student can make to his/her chosen discipline and the research culture of the University. To this end, the University endeavours to provide a high-quality and supportive research environment.

The University has a responsibility of ensuring that all students have access to appropriate I.T. and library facilities, including access to the web and a personal email address.

The Graduate Centre and the Graduate Schools provide opportunities, additional to those within schools, for research students to come together to share and develop research interests with a wide range of other researchers, allowing them to feel part of the research community.

So that postgraduate research students can undertake research effectively, each school endeavours to provide the best and most appropriate working accommodation, equipment and resources that it can. It is recognised that the facilities made available by different schools vary depending on the resources available to the school, its policies on allocation of resources and the needs of the academic discipline.

## **3 RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **3.1 The University**

The Graduate Development Committee is a senior committee of the University which works in support of the University's Mission and Aims to promote and enhance Cardiff's postgraduate culture and community. The Committee provides a central focus for all postgraduate research activities throughout the institution. It is charged, *inter alia*, with setting standards, monitoring quality assurance procedures and promulgating good practice in the education and management of the University's postgraduate research students. The Chair of the Graduate Development Committee is also the 'Dean of Graduate Studies'.

The University, through its Graduate Development Committee, is responsible for ensuring that appropriate policies and procedures are developed for the management and education of its postgraduate research students. It is also responsible for monitoring the implementation of these policies and reviewing their effectiveness.

The following are specific responsibilities at University level:

- .1 the definition of University-wide regulations governing research degree programmes, and procedures and policies on selection and admission, supervision, progress monitoring, training and examination - as expressed in this Code;
- .2 ensuring that research students receive up to date information about the regulations governing their degree programmes, and on University-wide policies through this Code and other communications, as applicable;

- .3 advising academic schools on the production of written guidance and the definition of school policies affecting research student management and education;
- .4 the definition of regulations regarding research students who are engaged in teaching and assessment activities;
- .5 providing clear guidance on complaints and appeals procedures;
- .6 monitoring, and acting upon, the institutional performance indicators associated with research student activity.

### 3.2 The Head of School

The Head of School has delegated authority from the University for the management of the school's research degree activity. S/he is responsible for the management and academic welfare of all research students registered in his/her school, for ensuring that systematic and transparent monitoring and assessment mechanisms are in place to guarantee that the student's progress is reviewed independently and that the final examination is rigorous, fair and consistent

This Code of Practice does not presume to dictate how a Head of School is expected to carry out these responsibilities. It is recognised that internal arrangements for the management of research students can, and do, differ from school to school. Nevertheless, it is incumbent on every Head of School to ensure that the local arrangements for the management of research students (defined in the School Framework) are clearly visible and understood by all staff and students involved.

The responsibilities of the Head of School include:

- .1 The definition and establishment of a local **School Framework**, always with regard to the over-arching University principles expressed in this Code. The School Framework should cover the following arrangements:
  - recruitment and admission of research students, including school/programme entry requirements (always having regard to the minimum requirements set out in the University's Senate Regulations);
    - school induction activities;
    - skills training/development and Personal Development Planning;
    - school supervision policy and arrangements, including the allocation of supervisory duties and staff training and development in this area;
    - arrangements for the formal monitoring of research student progress and progression decision (always having regard to the University's Research Student Monitoring Procedures);
    - mechanisms for research student representation;
    - mechanisms for research student consultation and feedback, including a student/staff forum;
    - mechanisms for selecting and nominating examiners.
- .2 The appointment of a Director of Postgraduate Research Studies, someone experienced in the supervision of research students, who is recognisable to students and staff alike as the person on hand to provide advice and support. The Head of School must ensure that the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies is clearly identified and that the role is clearly defined.

- .3 The arrangements for research students employed in teaching activities: the Head of School must ensure compliance with the University Regulations governing the employment and training of postgraduate research students for teaching and assessment.
- .4 The proper conduct of all research degree examinations.
- .5 The conduct of the **Annual Review and Evaluation of Postgraduate Research Activity**. The Annual Review is a key element of the University's procedures for the effective discharge of its responsibilities in respect of the quality of the learning and opportunities provided for its research students. Its purpose is to:
  - provide Schools with the opportunity to reflect upon and evaluate their postgraduate research student activity, the monitoring it receives, the quality of the student experience and the outcomes of activity, in order that opportunities for improvement can be identified and good practice built upon;
    - identify practice or innovation that is worthy of dissemination and to draw to the attention of the institution matters of generic interest or concern.

### 3.3 The Director of Postgraduate Research Studies

The duties of a Director of Postgraduate Research Studies will vary between schools. Their precise responsibilities must be clearly defined and articulated to students and staff alike by the Head of School. They typically include:

- .1 on behalf of the Head of School, ensuring the implementation of the local School Framework of policies and procedures, in compliance with the provisions of this Code;
- .2 providing appropriate written guidance for research students, so that they are made aware of available facilities and resources, skills development and training, of policies and procedures for supervisory arrangements, including changes to supervision, monitoring and progression, and the operation of the student/staff forum;
- .3 overseeing the selection of applicants for admission to research degrees;
- .4 advising the Head of School on the allocation of supervisory duties;
- .5 arranging induction and training programmes for new research students;
- .6 providing pastoral care for the department's research students, including:
  - making arrangements for students with special needs;
    - counselling students who are experiencing any difficulties with their agreed schedule of work and/or their relationship with their supervisor(s);
- .7 advising supervisors who are experiencing problems with individual students;
- .8 advising the Head of School, as necessary, on any changes needed in the allocation of supervisory duties, either temporarily or permanently;
- .9 overseeing the school's progress monitoring procedures;



- .10 reporting to the Head of School and/or relevant school Committee on matters of concern relating to the progress of individual students;
- .11 reporting to the Head of School and/or relevant school Committee on matters of concern arising from feedback from students, academic staff or examiners;
- .12 overseeing the administrative arrangements for *viva voce* examinations;
- .13 undertaking, on behalf of the Head of School, processes that contribute to the Annual Review and Evaluation of Postgraduate Research Activity.

### 3.4 The Supervisor

Supervisors are responsible to the Head of School for the management of research degree candidates assigned to them by the Head of School. It is expected that all supervisors will provide appropriate support and guidance to their student(s), and through expert advice and direction, will encourage their students(s) to achieve their research potential and assist them to submit a completed thesis for examination by the end of their period of fee-paying registration.

They are expected to provide advice at every stage of the planning and conduct of the research and the writing of the thesis.

Before agreeing to supervise a research student, supervisors should satisfy themselves that they have the necessary knowledge and expertise to supervise the project which the student wishes to undertake, that the project is appropriate for the level of degree and can reasonably be undertaken with the resources available and within the required time-scale, and they are confident, as far as is possible, that the student is capable of undertaking the project successfully.

The **Main Supervisor** (refer to section 9 of this Code) is primarily responsible for giving help and advice in choosing a topic of appropriate scope and significance, obtaining good research training, and organising the research.

The duties of the Main Supervisor include:

- .1 being aware of how to access the appropriate University's Regulations, Codes of Practice and Procedures governing research degrees, and drawing the student's attention to them as appropriate;
- .2 updating their knowledge and skills with regard to research student supervision;
- .3 giving guidance about:
  - the nature of research in the discipline concerned;
  - the standard of work expected in relation to the qualification aim;
  - the planning of the research programme, bearing in mind the deadline for submission;
  - sources, methods and techniques;
  - the specialist research skills and the generic skills the student should acquire and how this might be done;
  - Personal Development Planning;
  - matters of confidentiality, ethical considerations relating to particular techniques, sources or results;
  - research integrity and the avoidance of plagiarism;

- .4 defining, in consultation with the student, the topic of the research programme and being satisfied that the proposed project can realistically be completed within the period of registration;
- .5 monitoring the student's progress throughout the planned timetable, advising as necessary on the completion of the successive stages of the work, agreeing objectives at each stage, so as to bring about the timely submission of the thesis for examination;
- .6 requesting written progress reports and returning work with constructive criticism and in reasonable time;
- .7 ensuring that the student is given prompt and candid advice about any inadequacy of progress or the standard of the written work being produced, and alerting the director of Postgraduate Research Studies to any difficulties in this regard;
- .8 providing, in accordance with the University's Progress Monitoring Procedures, regular progress reports on individual candidates;
- .9 maintaining, at all times, a proper and professional relationship with the student;
- .10 maintaining proper and frequent contact with the student and agreeing with the student the type of guidance and comment that he/she would find most helpful;
- .11 being accessible to the student at other times, within reason, when s/he may need advice;
- .12 responding to requests from the student for advice and guidance within a reasonable timescale;
- .13 paying special attention to the 'settling in' of new students and alerting the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies to any particular difficulties that they are experiencing, especially in the early stages of their work, so that appropriate remedial help can be arranged;
- .14 ensuring that students are competent to perform their tasks safely, and that they comply with University and departmental health and safety procedures;
- .15 encouraging students to talk about their work to other staff or at seminars, so as to give them practice in oral presentations before their formal examination;
- .16 encouraging students to keep abreast of all relevant developments in their subject area;
- .17 reading the draft thesis and advising on its amendment, before formal submission for examination;
- .18 providing guidance to candidates whose examined work has to be amended and re-submitted for further examination;
- .19 advising the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies of planned absences and suggesting alternative arrangements;

.20 advising the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies of any major changes in research direction occurs where the expertise of another supervisor becomes necessary.

**Second supervisors** provide independent advice to the student. A second supervisor may possess knowledge and skills relevant to the student's research project. Alternatively, s/he is someone to whom the student can refer general academic and pastoral issues. Second supervisors are responsible for keeping acquainted with the progress of the student's work and of being available to provide feedback and advice according to an agreed schedule.

Further duties of second supervisors will vary according to the School Framework and the organisational arrangements of particular supervisory teams. It is important therefore that the roles of all members of a student's supervisory team are clearly defined and communicated to all parties concerned.

All members of the supervisory team are considered to have an active role in the student's supervision and academic management. None of the members are normally eligible to provide an independent assessment of progress and cannot be appointed as an internal examiner to the Examining Board.

### 3.5 The Student

Research degree students are expected to assure themselves of the terms of their candidatures (including any particular requirements stipulated by their sponsors) and their responsibilities towards the successful completion of his/her work.

Supervisors help and support their students, but it is the student him/herself who must be prepared to take the initiative, and who is responsible for her/his own work, for the timely submission of a theses, and for its quality and integrity.

The responsibilities of the student include:

- .1 agreeing with the supervisor(s) the topic for the research programme;
- .2 agreeing with the supervisor(s) an overall timetable for the completion of the work and a schedule of regular meetings at which the detailed planning/progress can be discussed;
- .3 alerting the supervisor(s), without delay, to any factors that have disrupted the schedule or otherwise impeded progress, including any matters which may require application for an interruption of study or an extension to the submission deadline;
- .4 agreeing with the supervisor(s) the type of guidance and comment that would be most helpful;
- .5 performing the research work according to the agreed timetable and arranging to meet with the supervisor(s) according to the agreed schedule;
- .6 preparing adequately for meetings with the supervisor(s);
- .7 attending any development opportunities that have been identified and agreed with the supervisor(s);

- .8 submitting regular, written reports to the supervisor(s), as required by the University's Progress Monitoring Procedures (refer to section 10 of this Code);
- .9 maintaining, at all times, a proper and professional relationship with the supervisor(s);
- .10 deciding when to submit the thesis for examination (within the permitted time-limit), taking due heed of the supervisor(s)' advice;
- .11 maintaining contact with the supervisor(s) in the interval between the end of fee-paying registration and actual submission for examination;
- .12 consulting the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies in the event that the working relationship with the supervisor(s) is problematic, or if they have any doubts about the quality of their supervision;
- .13 attending any interviews requested by the supervisor(s), the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies, school committee or the Head of School;
- .14 reporting significant absences such as holiday arrangements in advance to the supervisor(s), and any inability to attend the University according to the agreed schedule, due to illness or other circumstances, as soon as is practicable; the required level of reporting will differ between part-time and full-time students;
- .15 complying with University Regulations and procedures, relevant school policies and procedures and the regulations for any studentship or award that is held;
- .16 being familiar with the University's Research Governance Framework and the Student Guide to Academic Integrity;
- .17 making appropriate use of the study and research facilities provided and, if required to share facilities, to do so with due regard for fellow students/workers;
- .18 replying to communications from the University or school as appropriate;
- .19 reporting any special circumstances, in writing, to the Convenor of the Examining Board that should be made known to the examiners;
- .20 taking account of guidance and feedback from supervisors(s).

### **3.6 'Attendance'**

#### *.1 Full-time students*

The University does not specify how much time a research student must spend at the University or in the school concerned. This should be agreed between student and supervisor(s) and should be in accordance with any guidelines in the School Framework.

Certain types of research necessarily involve periods of study away from Cardiff - for example, to collect data or samples or to carry out other fieldwork, or to visit libraries or archives. Students with industrially-linked projects may be required to work for agreed periods at the premises of the collaborating company. The duration and timing of these periods should be

established, as far as possible, at the outset, so that they can be addressed within the Research Plan.

Students whose research is being carried out within a research group or whose project is laboratory-based, may be required to keep regular attendance hours at the school. Work patterns of some other students - whose research is library-based, for example - do not impact in the same way on other researchers or the progress of the research itself.

Although 'attendance' requirements may change during the course of a research project, the general expectation should be understood by students and supervisors at its commencement.

Regardless, of the agreed pattern of 'attendance', full-time students are expected to devote their efforts to the research project on a full-time basis. Using the definition used by the UK Government's Higher Education Funding Councils and the Research Councils of a full-time postgraduate student 'load', this is 1800 hours per year. (This calculates at approximately 39 hours per week, allowing for six weeks holiday per year.) In practice, though, many students devote a greater number of hours than this to their research study at key stages of the programme.

## .2 Part-time students

Part-time students are expected to achieve the same learning outcomes by the end of their registered period and to devote the same efforts to research study but on a pro-rata basis, over the longer period. Specific arrangements for the supervision and monitoring of progress of part-time students are determined prior to admission.

If a student fails to devote sufficient time and effort to the research programme the school may seek to exclude him/her in accordance with the University's 'Procedure for Exclusion from Research Study'.

## 4 ADMISSION PROCEDURES

### 4.1 Selection

The task of selecting candidates for admission to research degrees should only be performed by the members of staff formally authorised by the Head of School to do so. The Registry will make the formal offer of admission on behalf of the University only when instructed by the named selector(s).

Every school needs to have a clear statement as to which individual member or group or panel of staff are responsible for the selection of applicants for admission to research degrees. Admission decisions should involve at least two members of University academic staff - normally the Head of School and/or the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies plus the intended supervisor(s).

In considering applicants for admission to research degrees, selectors should have regard to the following:

.1 the University's 'Guide to Good Practice in Postgraduate Recruitment';

.2 the University's Senate Regulations and General Entrance Requirement;

.3 the school and/or programme policy on admissions and entry requirements, including English Language proficiency.  
Typically, applicants will be expected to have one or more of the following:

- a first degree, normally with class 2:1 or equivalent in a relevant subject area,
  - a relevant Master's qualification or equivalent;
- .4 the applicant's potential for research studies as demonstrated by his/her existing academic qualifications and/or previous experience in a research environment and/or previous professional experience in an area relevant to the proposed field of study;
- .5 the degree of fit between the applicant's intended field of study and the school's research activities;
- .6 legal requirements and University policies and guidelines that relate to these requirements;
- .7 the likelihood that the proposed programme of research can be completed within the normal period of registration prescribed by the regulations;
- .8 the current capacity of the school to offer supervision to the applicant, in his/her proposed field of study;
- .9 the availability of adequate physical, equipment and library resources to support the proposed project;
- .10 the demands of any sponsoring or collaborating body as regards the terms of the proposed project;
- .11 the duration of funding likely to be available to the applicant and any deadline for submission or restrictions on the publication of results as imposed by the sponsor. Where projects are being negotiated with external partners and/or sponsors, it must be understood that the University expects that the entire work will be suitable for publication as a thesis (refer to section 2.2 of this Code).

Schools are encouraged to consider the merits of interviewing applicants where practicable, to assess their suitability to undertake the research degree for which they have applied. Normally, all applicants for publicly-funded places should be interviewed. The interview may be conducted either in person or by electronic means, including by telephone. Where interviews are part of the admission process the school should develop clear guidelines on the constitution and conduct of the interview panel and staff involved should have undertaken appropriate training on interviewing.

#### **4.2 The offer of admission**

The formal offer of admission is issued by the University Registry and includes the following details:

- .1 tuition fee levels;
- .2 any additional costs (such as 'bench fees'), as instructed by the school concerned;
- .3 method of study;

- .4 expected minimum period of study;
- .5 the names of the supervisors;
- .6 for part-time and external applicants, details of the supervision meeting and reporting arrangements;
- .7 title of the research project or the research topic;
- .8 arrangements for enrolment.

The offer of admission also includes instruction on how to access more general University and school-based requirements and information (such as responsibilities of research students, student conduct requirements, induction, skills development, academic progress monitoring and assessment, resource and support services).

#### **4.3 Additional information**

Schools are required to provide direct to the applicant any additional specific information, not otherwise supplied or made accessible, as necessary. This might include, for example:

- .1 any fieldwork requirements associated with the project;
- .2 requirements and conditions of any school-based sponsorship;
- .3 any issues associated with the particular research project in respect of human or animal ethics, intellectual property, restriction on access of research outcomes;
- .4 opportunities for undertaking teaching.

#### **4.4 Entry with exemption from the 'probationary period'**

A school may make an offer of admission to a PhD or EngD applicant which permits exemption from the 'probationary period' (which is the first year of a full-time programme and the first two years of a part-time programme), so reducing the period of registration, where the School is satisfied that the applicant satisfies the criteria laid down in the University's Senate Regulations and is suitably prepared. Given the many demands on research degree candidates, the University expects that such offers of admission are made in exceptional circumstances only.

#### **4.5 Transfer from another University**

A school may also accept, at any stage of a research degree programme, research students transferring from another university. Typically, such students transfer with their supervisor(s) and agreements are reached between the Head of School and his/her counterpart in the former institution. No minimum period of study at Cardiff is specified by the University but the combined periods of registration must equate to, or be in excess of, the minimum period of study for a Cardiff University award. In all cases, a Head of School should be satisfied that the student has met the required academic standard and has made sufficient progress to be able to complete the programme of research in the remaining period of registration or candidature at Cardiff University.

### **5 INDUCTION**

All new research students should be able to commence their studies with an understanding of both the academic and social environment in which they will be working. To this end, the University, via its Graduate Centre, provides a general induction programme at the beginning of each academic year, and further sessions to coincide with the range of entry points permitted for research students. The Graduate Schools may arrange additional introductory activities.

Every school must provide a complementary induction programme and provide all new research students with written information and notes of guidance appropriate to the school. This may be in the form of a hard-copy handbook or an electronic format.

At the very least, those research students who are unable to attend the school's induction programme in person (e.g. part-time students who are located at a distance from the campus and those candidates whose start dates do not coincide with the running of the course), should be issued with copies of University and school-based written guidance.

Topics for schools' induction programmes typically include the following:

- .1 (as necessary) the formal introduction of candidates to their supervisors and the school's Director of Postgraduate Research Studies;
- .2 an introduction to/guided tour of the school, its facilities and support services and staff;
- .3 a presentation on the school 's portfolio of research activities;
- .4 University and school notes of guidance/codes of practice relating to health and safety;
- .5 guidance on the respective responsibilities of students and supervisors, in accordance with the School Framework;
- .6 the school's arrangements for monitoring and reviewing progress, in accordance with the University's requirements;
- .7 the school's arrangements for research student communication and feedback mechanisms
- .8 the school's policy and provision for skills development and training.

## **6 THE RESEARCH PLAN**

It is imperative that every research programme should start with an agreed and documented Research Plan.

The Research Plan should normally be defined within two month of the student's initial registration, and then form the basis for the ongoing process of agreeing objectives and mapping progress throughout the course of the research degree programme, up until final submission.

The Research Plan should:-

- .1 be negotiated between student and supervisors;
- .2 be an agreed statement of the desired outcomes of the research degree;



- .3 define the project and describe the strategy for achieving a set of objectives within an agreed time-scale;
- .4 specify the frequency of formal meetings between student and supervisors;
- .5 be reviewed regularly by student and supervisors;
- .6 be capable of revision in response to changes in circumstances and unexpected research outcomes;
- .7 identify any specific, additional skills that the student needs to acquire in order to carry out the research.

Very few research students start their research programmes equipped with all the skills necessary to execute successful research and produce a successful thesis. So the Research Plan must cater for the learning of new skills - skills that will not only enrich the student's educational experience and enhance their personal career development, but that will help them also to produce a satisfactory thesis.

It is likely that a student's Personal Development Plan (refer to section 7.2 of this Code) will be linked to their Research Plan.

The Research Plan will evolve during the course of the research programme. It should be formerly reviewed and updated at least every six months as part of the preparation of the six-monthly progress monitoring reports. Usually, it will be revisited on a more frequent basis.

## **7 SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING**

All research students must therefore receive the training appropriate to their individual academic needs and objectives, so as to enable them to undertake their study programmes effectively and to complete them successfully and within the time-scale prescribed by regulation. It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that the needs of research students are identified and that students receive appropriate training in research and other skills.

The importance of acquiring research and other skills during research degree programmes is widely recognised. These skills improve the student's ability to complete the research programme successfully.

Development and application of such skills is also understood to be significant in the research graduate's capability for sustaining learning throughout his or her career, whether in an academic role, or in other employment. Research students are therefore encouraged to recognise the value of transferable skills in enabling them to take ownership and responsibility for their own learning, during and after their programme of study.

Where a school identifies particular skills as essential for all of its students, there must be an opportunity for exemption for students who can demonstrate they have already acquired these skills. Methods for exemption must be transparent and widely communicated. Schools should also identify the form of assessment and any qualification available to students for a programme of skills training (e.g. Diploma or Certificate).

Students have the responsibility to work with their supervisor(s) and school to identify the components of their training needs and to undertake appropriate training to develop the required skills. They have the right and responsibility to provide

feedback to the school, Graduate School, Graduate Centre or other University provider on training and development opportunities received and proposed.

Training and development opportunities at Cardiff are organised within three contexts: generic across subject areas, generic within subject area, and subject-specific.

- .1 Skills training and development opportunities that are considered to be generic across subject areas are primarily co-ordinated by the Graduate Centre.
- .2 Skills that are considered to be generic within subject areas are primarily co-ordinated by Graduate Schools.
- .3 Skills that are specific to a subject or school [or research group] are co-ordinated and delivered within that School or group. It is essential to note that 'delivery' in this context includes the crucial role of the supervisor(s) in research training.

Schools must ensure that students are aware of and can access appropriate training in whichever context it is offered.

### **7.1 Identification of training needs**

As part of the definition of the Research Plan, its review and the progress monitoring process, student and supervisor(s) should:

- .1 assess training needs at the commencement of the research programme, with due regard to external advice including the Joint Skills Statement of the Research Councils;
- .2 assess and record skills development at regular points in line with progress monitoring processes;
- .3 ensure consideration both of immediate skills development and career related skills;
- .4 document agreements about participation in skills development activity.

This process should enable the student to build a portfolio of evidence around skills development.

### **7.2 Personal Development Planning (PDP)**

Each Head of School is responsible for ensuring that all postgraduate research students are provided with opportunities to participate in a Personal Development Planning process that meets the minimum expectations of the University. These are as follows:

- .1 all programmes shall provide students with the opportunity to engage in a process of PDP and provide a means by which students can monitor, build and reflect upon their personal development;
- .2 students shall be introduced to the opportunities for PDP at the start of their programme;

- .3 the opportunities for PDP and rationale for engaging with PDP must be clearly articulated, for the benefit of students, within student handbooks, etc.;
- .4 all students shall be offered support in undertaking PDP - schools are free to decide where this support should be located within the revised framework identified for student support and guidance but schools must ensure that students have appropriate and regular access to a named individual who will support (and challenge) the student through the PDP process; for research students, the named individual is normally a supervisor;
- .5 all students shall be provided with a recording facility to structure the PDP process and to encourage students to plan, record and reflect upon their academic, career and personal development;
- .6 schools will be expected to promote PDP as a holistic development process and promote opportunities available outside of the School, including the Research Students Skill Development Programme;

## 8 THE EMPLOYMENT OF RESEARCH STUDENTS

As part of their overall skills training and personal development needs, research students may seek opportunities to work as Tutors and Demonstrators within the University. The decision to take up such duties is one that each student should make in consultation with his/her supervisor(s).

It is the responsibility of the Head of School to ensure that research students who are involved in undergraduate teaching and/or assessment are fully trained and supported in that work. The employment of research students in teaching activities is based on the following principles:

- .1 research students cannot be obliged to carry out such duties. Only individuals contracted by schools to carry out paid work may be obliged to do so;
- .2 there should be a clear distinction between postgraduate research students who are provided opportunities to become involved in teaching activities and graduate teaching assistantships (even where those appointed as the latter are registered for a higher degree);
- .3 research students cannot be given responsibility for a module/course or its assessment;
- .4 research students employed by departments must be paid the appropriate rate for the job (- the University has approved rates of pay for Tutors and Demonstrators);
- .5 research students undertaking teaching activities should be provided with a clear statement of the activities for which they will be employed, with which they will be requested to agree, prior to commencing those activities;
- .6 where research students are employed, the Head of the employing School must ensure that:
  - the student receives training which is appropriate to the task(s) to be undertaken;
  - the total number of hours worked by the individual student does not exceed six per week, on average (including preparation and marking time);

- any marking or other formal assessments undertaken by the student are monitored by an experienced member of staff;
- the student is aware of his/her right to membership of the AUT or other Trades Union;
- research students should not be appointed members of formal Examining Boards;
- there is compliance with the University's Code of Practice of the Involvement of Postgraduate Research Students in Teaching Activities.

### **8.1 The Code of Practice of the Involvement of Postgraduate Research Students in Teaching Activities**

The concerns that underpin the writing of this Code are concerns for the quality of teaching that is delivered to students at Cardiff and for the ability of research students to bring their research to a successful conclusion.

The Code expresses the University's minimum expectations concerning the involvement of postgraduate research students in the teaching and assessment processes, where such opportunities are available to them within a school. The items displayed in bold font have been approved as Senate Regulations.

The word 'teaching' is used to encompass the broad range of activities that facilitate the learning of (usually) undergraduate students. The activity includes preparation for teaching and assessment activities and the time devoted to training that the research students are required to undertake

To avoid the lengthy repetition of the words 'postgraduate research students', the word 'Students' will be used with a capital letter to distinguish it from the group of students who are taught.

#### .1 The Student's choice

**Unless there are contractual obligations, no Student shall be required by the University or any of its schools to undertake teaching activities.**

Research students may seek teaching opportunities in their own or any other school of the University. Schools may offer opportunities for Students to teach. However, Students cannot be obliged to carry out such duties.

#### .2 Maximum hours

**Students shall not be required to undertake teaching in schools for more than an average of 6 hours a week during any one academic year. The 6 hours shall include class contact time, preparation time, assessment activities and any associated training.**

#### .3 Recruitment

**Students who wish to be considered for teaching opportunities shall be recruited by a selection process which shall include an interview. The initial selection process shall admit the successful postgraduate students to a pool. Selectors shall pay due regard to the University's Equal Opportunities Policy.**

Students will be selected on the basis of their ability to communicate clearly and in a mature, responsible and organized manner to small groups of students.

Entry to the pool should not be regarded as guaranteeing that any Student will be provided with teaching work.

**Once they have been admitted to the pool, Students will be required to undergo training and only after its satisfactory completion will they be eligible to be allocated teaching duties**

It would be expected that once admitted to the pool, a Student would, subject to satisfactory performance, stay in the pool for his or her period of registration as a Student at Cardiff University.

#### .4 Training

**Unless Students have undergone previous equivalent training, they shall, in the year in which they are recruited, receive not less than one day's training specific to their roles.**

General training (relevant to the activity type, such as demonstrating, small group teaching, problem solving classes) of at least half a day's duration should be provided and additional guidance must also be given that relates specifically to the module/course (e.g. learning outcomes, assessment methods, Health & Safety implications).

Initial training may include: -

- an introduction to the teaching activities of the school;
- communication in small groups;
- the dynamics of small groups;
- the organization of a tutorial session;
- introduction to assessment strategies and techniques that are related to the teaching work to be undertaken;
- dealing with difficult students/disciplinary issues
- supervised involvement in an appropriate teaching activity.

Training will also include engagement of the Student in at least two teaching sessions that are observed by the Student's Mentor or the Teaching Co-ordinator (see below).

In subsequent years of the Student's work in a school, s/he will undergo observation by the mentor or teaching coordinator at least twice a year, preferably in different kinds of teaching activities. Depending on the type of teaching activity and the level of their involvement, Students may require continued training and development, and support.

#### .5 Mentoring

**Heads of Schools shall ensure that Students who are engaged in teaching activities are mentored.**

To ensure coherency and consistency in the employment of Students as teachers, it is expected that, in large schools, there will be one member of staff who is responsible for the oversight and management of the recruitment and training of postgraduate teachers and for the allocation of their teaching duties - the Teaching Co-ordinator.

The Teaching Co-ordinator or Mentor will make the decisions about the Student's suitability to teach and/or determine further training requirements.

#### .6 Induction period

**The first semester of teaching will be regarded as a probationary period.**

Where a Student's teaching performance proves less than satisfactory during the first semester, and, in the judgment of the Mentor/Teaching Co-ordinator, this cannot be improved upon by further training, s/he will not be allocated any further teaching activities.

#### .7 Limited responsibility

**Students may assist in the delivery of modules but shall not be given responsibility for the organisation or management of any module.**

Schools should remember that Students' involvement in any aspects of the management or decision-making processes within a school relates to their status as students. They are not to be regarded as part-time members of staff.

#### .8 Involvement in assessment process

**Where Students are involved in any form of assessment procedure, this shall be in accordance with the provisions of the University's 'Minimum Standards on the Use of Persons other than Members of the Academic Staff in the Assessment Process'.**

This provides that:

- such assessments as contribute to the final module/course mark are second marked by a member of the Academic Staff and are limited, as far as is practicable, to those elements that do not contribute to the final programme award;
  - such assessments which do not contribute to the final module/course mark are second marked on a sampling basis by a member of the Academic Staff.

It is preferable that Students are not involved in elements of assessment that contribute to the final module/course mark.

**Students shall not be designated as internal examiners.**

### **9 SUPERVISION ARRANGEMENTS**

Supervision of postgraduate research students is influenced by many factors including the personalities involved and the environment in which the student and supervisors work. It is to be expected, therefore that there will be variations in supervisory practice across discipline areas. For this reason, this Code does not attempt to describe the detail of the supervision arrangements the school should have in place.

Each school must have in place a stated policy on supervision which is clearly communicated to both students and staff. This should include:

- .1 the model of supervisory arrangement adopted by the school;
- .2 the allocation of supervision duties;

- .3 training and development of supervisors;
- .4 guidelines on the frequency of supervisory meetings;
- .5 mechanisms for voicing dissatisfaction with the supervisory arrangements;
- .6 procedures for making alternative supervision arrangements in the event of a supervisor's temporary absence or illness, or their departure from the University.

If a supervisor ceases to be a member of the University staff during a student's research programme, s/he may continue to act in an advisory capacity, but the Head of School must ensure that control of, and responsibility for, supervision rests with the school. In the event of the main supervisor's departure from the University, a replacement must be appointed.

Each school must provide the student with the opportunity to comment on the standard of supervision received. (This may be through the six-monthly self-assessment reports.) There must be clearly defined procedures for students to make representation to the Head of School or the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies if they feel that their work is not proceeding satisfactorily for reasons outside their control, including the breakdown of a relationship with a supervisor. It is important that the published statement of these procedures makes it clear to students that they provide a means for discussing the possibility of changing the precise supervision arrangements. It is necessary that such procedures should operate expeditiously in order to avoid loss of time in relation to the research or its funding.

### **9.1 The Appointment of Supervisors**

Heads of School are responsible for appointing staff to act as supervisors to research degree candidates, in accordance with the University's Senate Regulations, and for ensuring the continuation of regular and appropriate supervision throughout each candidature. They are also responsible for the training of staff who are to be appointed as supervisors and the monitoring of their performance as supervisors.

Heads of School should give serious consideration to the managerial implications of research supervision and the training for it. They are encouraged to develop explicit mechanisms for determining and monitoring staff workloads in respect of teaching, research and administrative commitments, so that there is sufficient time for supervision of an appropriate standard.

When appointing a member of staff as a main supervisor, the Head of School must:

- .1 be satisfied that the member of staff appointed to act (a) has received adequate training in research supervision skills; and (b) is experienced in research and possesses an appropriate breadth of understanding to be able to make a positive contribution to the student's research endeavours.

(The University expects all new supervisors to receive training in supervision, and to be supported by experienced supervisory team members(s));

- .2 allow proper time for both the tasks of supervision and the training and development for them;
- .3 always have regard to the existing supervisory and other workloads of the member(s) of staff concerned.

(An individual member of staff should not normally, at any one time, be supervising more than six candidates.)

.4 ensure that, normally:

- only members of staff who are experienced in research are appointed as main supervisors. Initially, inexperienced staff should, as part of their training, assist more experienced staff with their supervisory duties;
  - no probationary member of staff is appointed as a main supervisor;
  - any fixed-term member of staff who is asked to supervise has a co-supervisor;
  - whenever circumstances dictate either a temporary or permanent change in supervisory arrangements, new arrangements are put in place without delay;
  - where there are irreconcilable differences between a candidate and his/her supervisor, agreed alternative supervisory arrangements are put in place;

.5 keep under review the outcomes of research degree examinations and the associated examiners' reports, and, where necessary, direct members of staff to undertake further/additional training in the supervision of research students.

## 9.2 Models of Supervision

Each postgraduate research student will have a supervisory team comprising at least two members of Academic Staff. The model(s) of supervision will be defined in the School Framework. Examples are as follows:

Main Supervisor plus Second Supervisor(s) - this model is typically employed where the subject expertise can be substantially provided by one member of staff. The other member(s) of the team may or may not have relevant specialist knowledge. At the least, the other member(s) of the team provide an additional contact point to whom the student can refer general academic and pastoral issues. (In this case, the second supervisor may be referred to by the school as the 'advisor' or 'mentor'.)

Main Supervisor plus Co Supervisor(s) - this model might be employed where the research project is interdisciplinary or where a new supervisor is being trained. Both supervisors have significant academic input and both are expected to provide expert advice, direction, support and guidance to the student. One is designated as the main supervisor, assumes overall responsibility for the management of the student, and is recognised as the first point of contact for the student. Second supervisor(s) may also be appointed.

Schools are not required to use the terminology used above, but are expected to use common terminology across the school, and to have clear definitions of roles and responsibilities.

## 9.3 Supervisory meetings

The frequency of meetings between student and supervisor is likely to vary between disciplines, according to the relative strengths and development of the student, the mode of study, the make-up of the supervisory team, and at different stages of the research project. The important thing is that the frequency is agreed by the student and supervisors and is in accord with any requirements of the School Framework. The student and supervisors may choose to record the agreed schedule of meetings in the Research Plan



A supervisory meeting should be considered to be a formal, uninterrupted event, to which sufficient time and attention should be devoted.

Both the student and supervisor(s) should keep an agreed, documented record of the outcomes of the meeting.

## **10 MONITORING STUDENTS' PROGRESS**

The University has placed its schools under an obligation to monitor effectively and rigorously the progress of their research students. As part of the University's Research Student Progress Monitoring Procedure, students and their supervisors are required to produce formal progress reports at frequent intervals. These reports, however, should never be allowed to substitute for the meaningful dialogue and ongoing consultations between the student and their supervisors.

Each school is expected to have in place arrangements, appropriate to the discipline and the school's own stated supervision and monitoring policies, for assessing research students' progress. The school must consider how its arrangements can support the monitoring of part-time students and/or those studying away from Cardiff for a period of time, as the University's minimum requirements apply to all categories of students carrying out research.

The School Framework should detail the local arrangements for administering the monitoring procedure, as well as the involvement of co- and secondary supervisors, the role of the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies and/or the Head of School, and of the relevant school committee, and the mechanisms for ensuring a formal review of the student's progress, which includes an element of assessment independent of student and supervisors.

The progress of all students registered for higher degrees by research shall be monitored from the date of initial registration on the programme through to thesis submission (including during any period beyond that of fee-paying registration and any resubmission period). A student whose progress is less than satisfactory has a right to know, and the school has a responsibility to decide whether or not they should be allowed to proceed with their research studies.

### **10.1 Six-monthly progress reports**

The principle underlying the six-monthly reporting exercise is that it allows a student's progress to be assessed with sufficient frequency to allow for prompt remedial action to be taken as necessary. This exercise should involve reviewing and updating the Research Plan.

.1 Research students are required to submit Self-Assessment Reports, in accordance with deadlines specified by the school, at six-monthly intervals up until thesis submission.

.2 The Self-Assessment Report may prompt the student to reflect, *inter alia*, upon the following;

- the current stage of research and production of thesis;
  - progress made against agreed objectives and milestones;

- any specific problems associated with the research, which might require access to additional resources or advice;
- any non-academic problems that have impeded the research, or are likely to do so;
- the level of satisfaction with the supervision - including frequency of meetings, adequacy and speed of feedback and advice;
- training and/or skills development that has been undertaken during the last six months;
- further training needs;
- any other matters that should be brought to the attention of the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies.

.3 Supervisors are required to produce a Student Progress Report for each student working under their direction, at six-monthly intervals, up until thesis submission.

.4 The supervisor's report may cover, *inter alia*, the following:

- assessment of progress in a number of specified areas;
- whether the student has maintained regular contact;
- the estimated submission date;
- any risks that the student will not submit by the University deadline;
- any known non-academic factors which have impeded (or will impede) the student's progress;
- the identification of any specific training, resources or advice required;
- any other matters that should be brought to the attention of the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies.

.5 The supervisor should discuss his/her report with the student and allow the student the opportunity to comment.

.6 Both the student and supervisor reports are considered and reviewed by the school in accordance with the policy described in the School Framework.

.7 Where a student fails to submit a Self-Assessment Report, without proper explanation, the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies may request the student concerned to attend an interview to discuss the reason(s) for the non-submission of the Report.

.8 Where a student's Self-Assessment Report and/or the supervisor's Progress Report give rise to concern about the student's progress, the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies shall request the student concerned to attend an interview with him/her or to appear before the relevant school Committee.

.9 The supervisor(s) shall be invited to attend any interview with the student. (The student can, however, request a separate meeting with the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies to which the supervisor(s) shall not be invited to attend.)

.10 A written record of any formal progress interview conducted by the Director of Research Studies or the school Committee shall be placed on the student's school file and a copy given to the student.

- .11 A student who fails to submit two consecutive Self-Assessment Reports can be deemed by the School to have terminated his/her candidature for a research degree. The student shall be notified in writing, by the Head of School or his/her nominee, that they are deemed to have withdrawn. A copy of the communication shall be sent to the Director of Registry.

## 10.2 Annual progress review and progression

The progress of every research student shall formally be reviewed, in accordance with the procedures set out in the School Framework, on an annual basis up until the completion of the research study.

Schools should ensure that the review process has been completed by the end of each twelve months of the student's candidature, ahead of the next enrolment date for that student, where applicable. In practice, therefore, the procedure should initially commence after approximately nine months of registration, then every subsequent twelve months. The school's procedures for conducting the annual progress review and criteria for progression must be clearly communicated to its students and staff.

For PhD and EngD students, the first year of a full-time programme (or the first two years of a part-time programme) is considered to be probationary. Some schools choose to register their students as 'MPhil/PhD' during this period in order to emphasise the importance of demonstrating satisfactory progress before being permitted to move on to the next stage of the programme. In addition, however, all students' progress is formally reviewed at the end of every year of study, and a student may be required to withdraw from the University or to change from PhD to MPhil status if his/her progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory.

The exact format of the annual progress review will differ between schools, but must contain the following three elements:

- a substantial piece of written work from the student;
- a mechanism by which the student can be questioned about his/her work by those individuals assessing his/her progress (this may take the form of an interview or a presentation and question session);
- a documented outcome of the review and the progression decision

The formal review of progress and determining the progression decision must include individuals independent of the supervisors and the student.

The following is an outline of the University's minimum requirements for the formal annual progress review, upon which schools are required to build their specific requirements and arrangements.

- .1 The review is based on the submission, by the student, of a substantial piece of written work. The length and format of this work is defined by the school. (It is commonly equivalent to a thesis chapter or a paper for publication.)
- .2 The student's written report must be made available to those members of staff responsible for reviewing the student's progress in advance of the meeting, allowing for adequate consideration.

- .3 The student is required to attend a meeting set up to consider his/her progress. The format of the meeting is determined by the school. It might include a presentation by the student and/or a *viva voce* examination. The reviewers will discuss specific items arising from the written submission.
- .4 The review panel may include member(s) of the student's supervisory team but must also include at least one member of the academic staff who is independent of the supervisory team.
- .5 As part of the formal review, the reviewers receive a recommendation from the student's supervisor(s) regarding the continuation of the candidature.
- .6 The reviewers determine one of the following:
- that the student has made satisfactory progress (during the probation period or any other year of the programme) and shall be permitted to continue as a candidate for the qualification aim for which he/she is registered, or
  - that the student be permitted to change his/her registration from MPhil to PhD (taking into consideration the viability of the project as well as the progress of the student), or
  - that the student's progress is less than satisfactory and he/she is required to change his/her registration from PhD to MPhil (having satisfied themselves that the revised research project is, or will be, appropriate for an MPhil submission within a revised time-scale, and that the student has made or is making adequate progress toward the revised qualification aim), or
  - that the student's progress is less than satisfactory and he/she be warned of exclusion from research study.
- .7 Where a student expresses a wish to change his/her registration status from MPhil to PhD, but the supervisor finds himself/herself unable so to recommend, the student may request a separate hearing by a Committee or Panel appointed by the Head of School, for the purpose. The decision of the Committee or Panel shall be final.
- .8 The student shall be informed of the reviewers' decision immediately. The reviewers will then provide a report, summarising the assessment. Any unsatisfactory aspects of performance should be clearly defined with an attempt to identify the underlying cause, and with recommendations as to subsequent progress and actions. The student will be given a copy of the report and will be given the opportunity to discuss any aspects with the Chair of the meeting, and should be allowed to add comments to the report.
- .10 The progression decision for each student shall be reported to the Registry.
- .11 Where the decision reached by the reviewers is that the student be warned of exclusion, the school shall follow the University's 'Procedure for Exclusion from Research Study'
- .12 A student can appeal against exclusion in accordance with Procedure for Appeals against Exclusion/Termination of Candidature.

## **11 STUDENT REPRESENTATION, COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK**

Each school must provide regular opportunities for its research students to communicate individual and collective feedback, and must have in place mechanisms to review and respond to this feedback, as appropriate. Schools should ensure that

the procedures they have in place take account of the diversity of research programmes and methods of study prevalent.

- .1 Each school must have in place a student/staff forum that considers research degree programme matters, and that should normally meet no less than three times per year. Schools with particularly small numbers of research students may choose to combine this forum with its student/staff panel for postgraduate taught students. Schools may wish to consider the merits of an on-line forum, especially those which admit part-time research students.
- .2 Individual feedback may be collected by school-based questionnaires, set up for this purpose, or combined with the six-monthly self-assessment part of the progress monitoring procedure.
- .3 Heads of Schools are also responsible for ensuring that opportunities are provided for research students to be represented on any relevant school committees.

## 12 RESEARCH DEGREE EXAMINATION

The conduct of research degree examinations is governed by University's Senate Regulations. Heads of School are responsible for the proper conduct of all research degree examinations. They should ensure that the University's Procedures for the Conduct of Research Degree Examinations are routinely made available to those participating in the examination process.

### 12.1 Arrangements for the *viva voce* examination

All candidates registered for research degrees at Cardiff University are required to undergo an oral examination, or '*viva*'.

(Where a candidate has previously failed to satisfy the examiners and has re-submitted a thesis for further examination, and where the Examining Board is satisfied that the re-submitted work meets the criteria for the award for which the thesis was submitted, the requirement for a further oral examination may be waived with the agreement of all members of the Examining Board.)

The *viva* will normally be held within three months of the date of thesis submission. The school should keep the candidate informed about the progress being made in arranging the *viva* date. Candidates who are resident abroad may negotiate a date for their oral examination that is more than three months after the date of submission. In all cases, the examination must take place not more than twelve months after submission of the thesis.

For each thesis submitted for examination, the Head of School appoints a senior member of staff to act as Convenor to the Examining Board. It is common practice for the Head of School to identify a single senior member of staff to act as Convenor to all research degree Examining Boards in that school, except for those where that member of staff has been involved in the supervision of the student. In some schools the Head of School acts as Convenor.

The Convenor must be satisfied that there is a *prima facie* case for examining the work before the submission is accepted and further arrangements for the examination are made. If the Convenor is not satisfied that a *prima facie* case exists, then he/she must advise the Head of School and inform the candidate accordingly, and in writing. The candidate has the right to appeal against this decision to the Chair of the Graduate Development Committee.

The Convenor is responsible for overseeing all the practical arrangements for the examination and for informing the candidate of the arrangements.

## **12.2 The selection, nomination and appointment of examiners**

The Examining Board will comprise a Chair and at least two examiners and will be appointed in accordance with the University's Senate Regulations.

The School Framework should describe the processes by which internal examiners are appointed and by which external examiners are nominated for appointment by the Chair of the Graduate Development Committee.

In some schools it is practice to invite the candidate's supervisor(s) to attend the *viva*, though s/he can play no part in examining the candidate. If a student does not wish his/her supervisor(s) to attend the *viva*, this wish must be respected.

## **13 RESEARCH STUDENTS' DISSATISFACTION AND COMPLAINTS**

Heads of School should ensure that their research students are fully aware of the channels of communication that exist for dealing with problems associated with their programme of study.

It is expected that most problems encountered by research students in the course of their studies will be capable of resolution within the school. Normally, a research student with a particular problem will refer it to his/her supervisor(s), or, if it concerns his/her relationship with a supervisor, to the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies.

If necessary, the Director of Research Studies will refer the problem to the Head of School. In the event that a research student is seriously dissatisfied with the arrangements for his/her research programme and is unable to reach agreement with the Head of School over those arrangements, the student may refer his/her problem to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Dean of Graduate Studies will attempt to negotiate a solution with the Head of School concerned.

If all else fails, the student has recourse to the University's Student Complaints Procedure.

## **14 APPEALS AGAINST RESEARCH DEGREE EXAMINING BOARD DECISIONS**

A candidate who is not recommended for the award of the degree for which he/she has submitted, is at liberty to appeal against the decision of the Examining Board.

For research students who commenced their programmes before October 2005, appeals against the decisions of research degree Examining Boards are dealt with by the Senior Vice-Chancellor of the University of Wales, under the University of Wales Appeals Procedure (Postgraduate Research Degrees). If a candidate wishes to appeal against the decision of the Examining Board, s/he must make a full, written application to the Academic Secretary of the University of Wales within two months of the date of notification, by the Academic Secretary, of the result.

For research students who commenced their programmes from October 2005 onwards, appeals against the decisions of research degree examining boards are dealt with by the Director of Registry, under the Cardiff University Appeals Procedure (Postgraduate Research Degrees). If a candidate wishes to appeal against the decision of the Examining Board, s/he must make a full, written application to the

Director of Registry within two months of the date of notification, by the Registry, of the result

If a candidate is not recommended for the award of the degree for which s/he has submitted, s/he may appeal against the decision as reached by the Examining Board, on the following grounds only:-

- .1 defects or irregularities in the conduct of the examination or in written instructions or advice relating thereto;
- .2 extenuating circumstances affecting performance, of which the Examiners were not aware;
- .3 evidence of prejudice/bias/inadequate assessment on the part of one or more of the Examiners;
- .4 inadequacy of supervision, in which case there must be exceptional reasons why this was not reported prior to the examination taking place.

Appeals which question the academic judgement of the Examiners are not admissible.

## CARDIFF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH DEGREES HANDBOOK: A CODE OF PRACTICE

CARDIFF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH DEGREES HANDBOOK: A CODE OF PRACTICE