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UNIVERSITY OF  
**CHICHESTER**

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**Higher Degree Regulations  
Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision**

**2025/26**

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### Introduction to the Code of Practice

1. The University undertakes to make satisfactory arrangements for the admission, candidature, supervision and examination of research students. This Code of Practice sets out guidelines for candidature for MPhil/PhD at the University. It is intended to complement the Higher Degree

Regulations and provide a framework for all supervisory relationships. It may be supplemented by academic area and/or Research Degree Area guidelines which are consistent with this Code of Practice but specify more detailed procedures operating at a local level.

The Code is intended to promote good practice in research candidature and supervision and ensure a degree of comparability in the student experience. It is intended to cover the many different types of research student and to recognise the diversity of experiences, needs, interests and styles. It is essential that a good working relationship is established between the supervisory team and the research student, and that responsibilities on both sides are clearly defined and understood. In considering how best to support research students with disabilities, supervisors are recommended to contact the [Disability and Dyslexia Service](#) via the University's Support and Information Zone.

Ensuring compliance with the Code, the University will monitor research degree provision against internal and external indicators and targets. In particular, in order to evaluate the success of its postgraduate research degrees, the University will collect and review:

- submission and completion times and rates, with account taken of any variations (for example relating to individual research students' circumstances, part-time programmes and the requirements of research councils, sponsors or other relevant bodies);
- pass, resubmission, and fail rates;
- withdrawal rates;
- the number of appeals and complaints, the reasons for them, and how many are upheld;
- analysis of comments from examiners;
- recruitment profiles;
- data relating to equality and diversity.

The University will also monitor and review information on subsequent employment destinations and career paths of research students who have achieved the qualification.

## Introduction to the Research Environment

2. The research environment should be regarded as a place of learning and research productivity.

The environment allows for research students' changing needs and requirements as the programme develops, including providing an adequate amount of academic and, if relevant, work or practice-based supervision of an appropriate quality. To satisfy these aims, there should be a clear commitment to research in the academic area(s) and Research Degree Area in which research students are to be supervised, as well as commitment to encouraging the integration of research students into the research activity of the relevant academic area(s), Research Degree Area and any associated groupings, such as research entities (centres or groups/laboratories). New Research Degree Areas must undergo an approvals process, completing a pro forma that is scrutinised by the Research Degrees Group, Research and Innovation Committee, and Academic Board. Factors that can be used to indicate excellence in research would normally include:

- demonstrable research achievement as recognised either through peer assessment as internationally recognised or above, or consistently recognised by the award of grants in open competition;
- sufficient numbers of research-active staff, including postdoctoral researchers and research students (either located at the provider or included in collaborative or networked arrangements);
- engagement with the non-academic community around knowledge exchange and research impact to support the dissemination, uptake and application of research outcomes in wider society.

An appropriate environment in which to do and learn about research would normally include:

- exposure to researchers working at the highest level in the research student's chosen field and in cognate and related disciplines;
- the expectation that research students' proposed topics of research will relate substantially to the research programme of the relevant Research Degree Area/academic area(s)/Research Entities to enable research students to relate current research and issues arising from it to their own research;
- opportunities and encouragement for research students to work and exchange ideas with people and organisations using research outcomes for their own purposes and with colleagues in the wider research environment;
- access to academic and other colleagues able to give advice and support;
- adequate learning and research tools, including access to IT equipment, library and electronic publications;
- opportunities for research students to develop peer support networks where issues or problems can be discussed informally;
- supervision (see also the section on supervision) that encourages the development and successful pursuit of a programme of research;
- guidance on the ethical pursuit of research and the avoidance of research misconduct, including plagiarism and breaches of intellectual property rights;
- support in developing research-related skills and access to a range of development opportunities that contribute to the research student's ability to complete the

programme successfully (including, where appropriate, understanding issues of funding and of commercial exploitation);

- access to and support for a range of development opportunities that contribute to the research student's ability to develop personal, professional and, where pertinent, employment-related skills;
- availability of relevant advice on career development

An environment supportive of research achievement may include:

- a collegial community of academic staff and postgraduates conducting excellent research in cognate areas;
- supervisors with the necessary skills and knowledge to support research students in working towards the successful completion of their research programmes;
- access to welfare and support facilities that recognise the distinctive nature of research degree study;
- the opportunity for research students to raise complaints or appeal mechanisms for addressing research students' feedback both as individuals and collectively;
- sufficient implementation and monitoring mechanisms to ensure that where a project is undertaken in collaboration with another organisation, the standards of both organisations are maintained.

### **The Higher Degrees of MPhil and PhD**

3. The MPhil and PhD are higher degrees involving a programme of research training and supervision and leading to the production of a thesis or, in the case of research students in creative and/or performance based subject areas, the production of an original work together with additional material (as specified in the Higher Degree Regulations). The MPhil and PhD are two separate, distinct awards with the MPhil differing from the PhD in terms of the scope of study required and the extent of the original personal contribution to knowledge.

#### *The Thesis*

4. The thesis (or equivalent for creative and/or performance-based disciplines) is the outcome of the research project and the training programme. It must be composed clearly and presented in the required format. The subject should be dealt with in an orderly manner using appropriate research methods and techniques and displaying critical discrimination in evaluating the evidence.

### **Selection and Admission of Research Students**

#### *Entry Requirement*

5. Only appropriately qualified and prepared students will be admitted to research programmes. Applicants must demonstrate that they have the motivation and potential to complete a sustained piece of research and to produce a thesis. For doctoral research, students will normally be expected to have one or more of the following:

- a degree, normally with at least class 2(i) or equivalent, in a relevant subject;
- a relevant master's qualification or equivalent.

An application form must be sent to the Research Office in all circumstances, even in the case of externally-funded or bursaries students, since the details in the form are needed for administrative purposes (e.g., setting up the student's IT account, ChiView profile etc.).

### *English Language Proficiency*

6. Students whose first language is not English will also be required to demonstrate an adequate knowledge of English, this will normally be average IELTS score of 7.0 (or equivalent as described in the University's Admissions Policy). On an exceptional basis, a student with an IELTS (or equivalent) score below 7.0, or no English language qualification, may be admitted as long as this can be justified and supported by supervisor, Research Degree Coordinator and Director of Research. It is however important that extreme care be taken not to admit a candidate who does not possess the strong English language skills required for doctoral level study. Language competency and any support requirements should be documented on the application form. The Research Degree Area of Engineering and Design is exempt from this requirement. Instead, it requires IELTS score of 6.0 overall, with no less than 5.5 in any component. Individual Research Degree Areas may establish higher English language requirements for components or all of the IELTS test, such requirements will be clearly documented in the relevant Doctoral Programme Profile.

### *References*

7. Two academic references will be sought for all applicants. The references should clearly state why the referee believes the applicant has the capacity and capability to achieve the intended qualification (MPhil or PhD) in a timely manner assuming appropriate support from the University. Wherever possible, references will be sought from academics not associated with the supervision of the student. In exceptional cases where the logical choice for one or both academic references is/are also a member of the proposed supervisory team (e.g., when a student has undertaken all of their prior accredited learning e.g., undergraduate and Masters at the University of Chichester) then the Research Degrees Group reserves the right to request an additional statement from the Head of academic area (or if they are on the supervisory team, another senior member of academic area). In exceptional circumstances where a candidate is not able to get two academic references e.g., because of a significant period outside of higher education, then a reference from another professional context may be provided, as long as it specifically addresses the applicant's capacity and capability to perform at a high academic level over the period of study.

### *Selection Procedures*

8. Admissions procedures should be clear, consistently applied and always demonstrate equality of opportunity as described in the University's Equality and Diversity Policy, and the University's Admissions Policy.

- a. Admission decisions should involve at least two members of staff who have received instruction, advice and guidance in respect of selection and admissions procedures.
- b. All applicants for research degree programmes must be interviewed prior to registration. In exceptional circumstances, where the candidate's academic record is well known to the prospective supervisor(s) (e.g., the prospective supervisor taught the candidate as an MA student), a justification may be made for not holding a formal interview with the student. This must be recorded on the application form. The interview will ideally be carried out by a minimum of two appropriately qualified members of staff, one of whom should normally be the proposed Director of Studies. The interview may be undertaken in person, by telephone or video conference. Staff interviewing students should be trained in equality and diversity policies and interviewing techniques, and should be aware of the support available for disabled applicants.
- c. The University should provide clear, accessible, jargon-free information for potential applicants and staff involved in the admissions process, recognising diversity and different needs. Research students should be made aware of opportunities to apply for special funding, and how to apply for such funding. Information should also be provided regarding the support available for research students with a disability and how this support can be accessed within the University.
- d. Staff responsible for admissions should be aware of, and understand, the legal requirements of the process. Information about these requirements can be obtained from Director of Admissions and Academic Registry.
- e. The University has in place and maintains monitoring arrangements that show compliance with legal requirements, particularly in relation to Equality.

It is recognised there may be occasions when applicants feel they have cause for complaint. In the first instance, applicants should raise their concerns informally with the relevant Faculty staff and/or the Research Office. If matters cannot be resolved, applicants should refer to the University's Academic Regulations.

#### *Accepting an Applicant*

- Before recommending the acceptance of an applicant, the academic area(s) and students must be made aware of the costs of the planned research and the financial support available. The Research Degrees Group must also satisfy itself that:
- the programme has complied with the University's criteria for assessing the applicant's qualifications and preparedness for a research degree
- the programme is within the applicant's capabilities;

- the applicant is able to demonstrate an adequate knowledge of the English language, if their first language is not English (see paragraph 6 above)
- the applicant is capable of sustaining research at this level and completing within the required length of candidature;
- the applicant can be supported by suitable supervisor(s) and adequate facilities within an appropriate research environment (as set out in paragraph 2 above), including any additional support strategies, specialist equipment or assistive technology required by research students with a disability.

#### *Approval of an applicant*

9. Applicants who meet the University's standard entry requirements may be approved by the Research Degrees Group (RDG). In practice, this approval comes from the relevant Head/Director of academic area and the relevant Research Degree Coordinator, on behalf of RDG. Applications from candidates with non-standard entry qualifications should be recommended for approval by the appropriate Head of academic area to the Research Degrees Group. Advice on which qualifications might be regarded as 'standard' can be sought from the Research Office who will liaise with other Professional Services as appropriate.

#### *Transferring from another institution*

10. Applications from research students wishing to transfer to the University of Chichester with their supervisor from another institution are subject to the satisfactory provision of the following from the previous institution:
- a. an official release together with details of the duration of the research student's previous research study;
  - b. a brief progress report approved by an appropriate officer or committee at the previous institution;
  - c. confirmation as to whether the research student has transferred/upgraded from MPhil to PhD or not (if relevant); and
  - d. details of that process, if it has taken place.

If appropriate, academic areas may re-assess the research student's English language proficiency in order to ensure the University's English language requirements are being met.

11. Applications relating to research students wishing to transfer to the University of Chichester independently of their previous supervisor and institution are subject to the satisfactory provision of the information described above and should also include:
- a. two academic references relating to recent previous study (required of all postgraduate applicants);



- b. copies of regular progress reports (preferably annual reports) from the previous institution as far as possible;
  - c. a clear recommendation from the selector (typically the proposed Director of Studies at the University of Chichester), following an interview with the research student, explaining why the research student wants to transfer institution, and why it is felt that prospects for successful completion will be better at the University of Chichester.
- 12. All such applications are subject to confirmation by the Research Degrees Group that satisfactory arrangements for supervision have been approved, and that the relevant Head(s) of academic area(s) is/are satisfied as to the arrangements for financial support for the research student and facilities for the project (including the provision of any additional support strategies, specialist equipment or assistive technology required by research students with a disability).
- 13. For any research student accepted for transfer, there would normally be a minimum of 12 months between the date of transfer and submission of the thesis even if the research student has already transferred/upgraded from MPhil to PhD at his or her previous institution.
- 14. Decisions on applications for transfer to the University are made by the Research Degrees Group. Paragraphs 13 and 14 of this Code also apply to research students transferring from another institution, unless agreed otherwise by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

#### *Formal Offer Letter*

- 15. The formal offer letter, which may form the basis of the contract between the research student and the institution, should define and communicate clearly the terms and conditions relating to the offer and its acceptance, including any known specified requirements of any sponsor, together with the research student's entitlements and responsibilities.

#### *Registration of Research Students*

- 16. Research students are expected to register promptly each academic year according to the procedures set out by the University. This will normally be through the University's online registration process or as otherwise directed by the Academic Registry. Students who have not completed required administrative processes may not be permitted to re-register until those processes have been satisfactorily completed.

#### *Research student Information and Induction*

- 17. Departments will provide research students with sufficient and timely information to enable them to begin their studies with an understanding of the academic and social environment within which they will be working. Guidelines on information that may usefully be provided are given in the Postgraduate Research Student Handbook. The timing and frequency of

inductions should also take account of part-time and international research students. Appropriate information regarding special arrangements or facilities should also be made available to research students with a disability. This should normally have been discussed and agreed individually with the research student prior to the commencement of his/her studies. Colleagues are advised to liaise with the Disability and Dyslexia Service as appropriate.

## **Research Training and Transferable Skills Training**

### *Introduction – Programme of research skills and transferable skills training*

18. Research students must have access to a suitable programme of research skills and transferable skills training which recognises differing needs arising from research student diversity. A range of mechanisms, sufficiently flexible to address individual needs, should be available to support research students' learning. Training programmes should support students' research, comply with any Research Council or funders' requirements, and help research students to prepare themselves for their subsequent career. Training may be provided in-house or by arranging access to external training programmes.

### *Academic Needs Analysis*

19. Research students' personal and professional developmental needs should be assessed on entry to a research degree programme by means of an academic needs analysis. This should cover:
  - the facilities required to undertake their research (for example, any specialist software packages or high specification computer, appropriate space to work – see paragraph 51 below);
  - whether they have subject-specific gaps in their knowledge base and how these might be filled (for example, by attending classes at Masters level);
  - whether they need to learn a language and/or require English language support during their candidature;
  - a self-assessment of their personal, professional and research skills as set out in the Vitae Researcher Development Framework and found in the Postgraduate Research Students Handbook and the relevant Moodle pages. Research students should be directed to the training on offer through the University, their academic area and their Research Degree Area more widely to meet the training needs identified.

Training needs should be re-assessed on an annual basis. Progress should be monitored and research students are required to maintain a record of personal achievement in their acquisition of knowledge of subject specific, personal, professional and research skills.

The Research Office collates, on an annual basis through the Annual Review report, the needs that have been identified in the academic needs analysis. Supervisory teams will ensure that suitable training is made available to meet individual research students' needs either in-house or externally.

The Research Degrees Group supported by the Research Office will maintain an oversight of the suitability of research training.

*Research Skills Training - Discipline-Specific and Generic*

20. Research skills training should be provided either by single subject groups or on a multidisciplinary basis, which forms a substantial and compulsory part of the research student's programme and is assessable where appropriate. There should be a clear statement of the compulsory courses. Such training should conform to the best practice recommended by the relevant Research Council and be required of research students except in cases where they have already developed sufficient and appropriate skills through a master's degree or other postgraduate work or appropriate work experience.

Training programmes should:

- ensure that research students develop so as to become increasingly aware of their own training needs, both discipline-specific and generic;
- enable research students to choose between a range of different approaches to their research study;
- achieve a balance between subject-specific and more general material which might relate to future employment needs;
- encompass the basic principles of research design and strategy including techniques (e.g., computing and bibliographic) for use in the research study;
- include opportunities for the presentation of research, both oral and written;
- provide access to relevant seminar programmes and learned conferences within and beyond the institution (where resources and opportunities permit);
- where appropriate, utilise the diverse cultural, social and educational backgrounds of research students in order to enrich the learning experience of all research students.

Academic areas should ensure that all research students can access skills training sessions and events, and that staff are aware of any particular additional learning needs.

*Transferable Skills Training*

21. The academic area should ensure that research students have access to suitable in-house or external training in transferable skills as appropriate.

Training programmes should enable research students:

- to develop good oral and written communications skills enabling them to articulate ideas clearly to a range of audiences;

- to use information technology appropriately for database management, recording and presenting material, etc.;
- to apply effective project management skills including realistic goal-setting and the prioritisation of activities;
- to appreciate the factors which contribute to the success of formal and informal teams;
- to provide effective support to others when involved in teaching, mentoring or demonstrating activities (please refer to paragraph 56 below for further guidance);
- to take ownership of their own career progression.

## **Ethical Considerations**

22. It is the research student's responsibility, with appropriate guidance from the supervisory team, to observe due ethical standards in the design, conduct and reporting of the research. Ethical considerations must be addressed in all research. In the case of research that involves human participants, an Application Form for Ethical Approval must be submitted. Consideration should also be given to different racial or cultural perspectives on research ethics. The University has established a Research Ethics Committee to consider and determine any such ethical issues. The University's Research Ethics Policy covers all research activity that comes under the scope of the University's definition of research in its Research Strategy. The Research Ethics Policy and other related documents can be accessed on the University's Research Ethics Moodle. Research students should receive formal training in research ethics to help them to understand both the formal mechanisms for gaining ethical approval for their research and the intellectual debates surrounding research ethics.

## **Candidature**

### *Initial Candidature*

23. A research student is required to register on the programme of the intended award i.e., either MPhil or PhD. A research student wishing to transfer from the MPhil programme to the degree of PhD must successfully complete the required transfer process to the satisfaction of the Research Degrees Group not less than six months before submission of the thesis.

### *Mode of Candidature*

24. Candidature may be full or part-time. Research students should satisfy the University that they can commit sufficient time to the project to sustain satisfactory progress.

### *Duration of Candidature, Suspensions of Candidature and Extensions of Candidature*

25. See the Higher Degree Regulations.

#### *Research Assistants*

26. A research assistant may also be registered, normally part-time, as a candidate for a research degree. Performance as an employee and progress as a research student should be assessed and treated separately. The candidate's research project would normally be independent of work undertaken for employment.

#### **Supervision**

27. Research students are allocated a supervisory team of at least two members, one of whom will be the 'Director of Studies' (see also paragraphs 39 to 43 below). The Director of Studies should be an academic member of University of Chichester staff. The co- or second supervisor should be a member of University of Chichester staff, or should be appointed by the University as an external supervisor for the duration of the programme with written confirmation and agreement of the requirements and expectations of the role of supervisor. All appointments to the supervisory team are approved by the Research Degrees Group. See also paragraphs 31 to 35 below regarding *Members of the Supervisory Team*.
28. The supervisory team should be chosen to provide adequate academic expertise. Where a research student's project requires further expertise, an additional supervisor should be appointed to provide the required specialist advice. This additional supervisor may be external to the University.
29. Academic areas should ensure that the quality of supervision is not put at risk as a result of an excessive volume and range of responsibilities assigned to individual supervisors. Where relevant, the workload of individual supervisors should reflect the different learning styles of research students. Normally an individual supervisor should not be supervising more than 5 FTE MPhil/PhD students. In exceptional cases, an individual supervisor may be permitted to exceed this threshold, subject to the approval of the Research Degrees Group and only if the relevant academic areas has made specific arrangements to allow the individual adequate time to supervise more research students.

#### **Responsibilities of the Supervisory Team**

The following paragraph should be read in conjunction with paragraphs below on *Progress Monitoring*, and *Arrangements for Research students Based at a Distance*.

30. The University is responsible for ensuring the appointment of an appropriate supervisory team and for ensuring that individual members of the supervisory team are fully aware of their role and responsibilities, the scope of which includes the following:

#### *Responsibilities at the outset of supervision*

- To meet with the research student to identify the initial objectives of the research.
- To confirm any requirements of the research student's sponsor, if applicable.

- To assist the research student in an academic needs analysis with respect to research skills (discipline-specific and generic) and transferable skills, identifying sources of provision at discipline/academic area/University level or externally, and a timescale for undertaking training.
- To ensure that the research student has access to information about events organised for, or open to, research students in the discipline/academic area/University (including workshops, seminars and conferences).
- For research students whose first language is not English, to advise on additional English language support if appropriate (for example, some research students may experience difficulties with technical language).
- If the research student has disclosed a disability, to identify ways in which they may be supported in their studies with help and advice as required by the Disability and Dyslexia Service. This service encompasses a wide variety of support for research students who have disabilities, mental health issues or specific learning difficulties. Research students should also be asked about the impact, if any, of research activity on their disability.
- To explain the roles of the members of the supervisory team and to discuss and agree the pattern and frequency of contact between members of the supervisory team; (for example, international research students may benefit from a higher frequency of meetings during the first year, or, for research students with a disability or illness, the effects of medication may need to be taken into account).
- To clarify arrangements for progress monitoring ensuring that the research student is fully conversant with the University procedures from the outset (see paragraphs 53 to 54 below).
- To ensure that the research student is cognisant of Intellectual Property (IP) issues that may be/become associated with the project and is aware of their responsibilities in relation to research ethics (see [Research Ethics Policy](#)) and relevant paragraph above), governance, and IP (see [Intellectual Property Policy](#)).
- To make the responsibilities as detailed in relevant paragraph below (Responsibilities of the Research Student) clear to the research student.

#### *Ongoing responsibilities*

- To maintain regular contact with the research student in accordance with arrangements established at the outset and in line with University policy. The frequency of meetings will depend upon the stage and nature of the research and the particular needs of the research student, but it is anticipated that for full-time research students these should be at least once a month, and more frequently at the start of the candidature. This could include both face-to-face and on-line meetings (see also relevant paragraphs below).

- To be accessible at other reasonable times when advice is needed, keeping in mind the needs of the individual research student.
- To provide advice and guidance as necessary on the planning and development of the research programme and standard of work expected, recognising that some research students may require additional support. Such advice and guidance will include reference to literature and sources, research methods and techniques, academic integrity including avoidance of plagiarism, research ethics and governance, issues of copyright, intellectual property, and health and safety.
- To ensure that the University's Equality and Diversity Policy and Inclusivity Plan are taken into account in all aspects of the research student's experience, and to be sensitive to the different needs of individual research students.
- To ensure that the research student conforms to the University's policies, including but not limited to: research ethics, governance, and Intellectual Property regulations and policies. All University policies can be found on the University's website <http://www.chi.ac.uk/aboutus/policies-and-statements>
- To monitor the research student's progress (requiring written work as appropriate), providing reports to the Research Office (and academic area) as required, and giving constructive and timely feedback which is accessible and useful to the research student.
- Where progress is unsatisfactory, or the standard of work unacceptable, to ensure that the research student is made aware of this and that steps are taken to develop a constructive plan for improvement.
- To set target dates for successive stages of the work in order to encourage timely submission of the thesis (considering any additional disability-related needs or language support arrangements required by the research student).
- To ensure that the research student is aware of other sources of advice at the University including safety legislation, Equality and Diversity Policy, intellectual property and careers guidance.
- To provide pastoral support and/or refer the research student to other sources of support, independent mentors and other research student support services.
- To check with any research students with regard to the effectiveness of any support they are receiving from the University services, and responding to any ongoing or acute difficulties.
- To liaise with external bodies as appropriate and make arrangements with any external supervisors.

- To keep the research student informed of events organised for, or open to, research students by the discipline/academic area/University encouraging them to participate as appropriate.
- To arrange, as appropriate, for the research student to present work to staff or peers at seminars or conferences; to arrange mentoring for publishing and grant writing as appropriate; to encourage publication of work as appropriate; and to act as a link between the research student and the wider academic community.
- To participate in appropriate staff development activities to ensure competence in, and bring enhancement to, all aspects of the supervisory role.
- Upon return from any suspension exceeding nine consecutive months, or upon the student exceeding eighteen months suspension in total since formally commencing candidature, the Director of Studies will interview the student to review and discuss overall progress to date, the currency of the research project and the expected end date of candidature.

#### *Responsibilities in the later stage of supervision*

- To ensure that, where a research student is unable to submit a thesis within the required time, a timely and reasoned application for extension of candidature is made in line with University policy.
- To ensure arrangements are made for examination of the research student including the nomination of examiners in accordance with University policy.
- To ensure appropriate examination arrangements are made for research students with a disability.
- To ensure that the research student is adequately prepared for the oral examination, arranging a practice viva voce if required.

#### **Members of the Supervisory Team**

See also the Higher Degree Regulations.

31. At least one member of the supervisory team must have prior experience of supervision which has resulted in a successful doctorate. For new supervisors, experience should be gained through working closely with an experienced supervisor and may include a recognised mentorship arrangement. Supervisors must be active researchers in the appropriate discipline, and should normally themselves have a PhD or equivalent substantial research experience, experience of publication, and expertise in the area of the student's research. Staff in formal candidature for a higher degree should not be appointed as a Director of Studies.



32. Other members of academically-related staff, or academic members of staff on probation, and Emeriti Professors/Research Fellows, may be appointed to the supervisory team but should not be the Director of Studies or the co-ordinating supervisor.
33. New supervisors should take, or have taken, appropriate training (including training to ensure awareness of diversity issues which may impact on the supervision process, e.g., research students wishing to participate in their religious festivals) as determined by the Research Office and be members of a supervisory team that includes an experienced supervisor.
34. Each academic area must designate a named individual from the supervisory team to act in the role of co-ordinator in order to ensure that the required administrative processes for the research student are carried out (e.g., progress monitoring reports, arrangements for the examination). The co-ordinator must be a permanent academic member of University of Chichester staff.
35. The contact details and responsibilities of all members of the supervisory team should be readily available to research students throughout their programme (see paragraph 38 above).

#### *Absence of a Supervisor*

36. If one of the supervisors is likely to be absent for a substantial period, normally one month or more, the supervisory team, in consultation with the research student, should collectively assist the appropriate academic area(s) in designating a temporary or permanent replacement, and make appropriate handover arrangements.

#### *Change of Supervisors*

37. A request for change of supervisor can come from a member of the supervisory team or from the research student. Consultation between all parties should occur at an early stage. Changes to the Director of Studies and/or the supervisory team must be approved by the Research Degrees Group. Records should be updated to record the reason for any change. Suitable handover arrangements should be made, normally via a handover process involving the outgoing supervisor, the incoming supervisor, and the Research Degree Coordinator. After the handover process, the new supervisory relationship should be monitored by the Director of Studies and/or the Research Degree Coordinator.

#### **Responsibilities of the Research Student**

38. The ultimate responsibility for the thesis lies with the research student and it is therefore essential that they participate fully in planning the research project, considering advice and discussing the work with the Director of Studies or supervisory team. Particular responsibilities of the research student will include:
  - showing commitment to the research project and programme of studies;
  - discussing with one or more members of the supervisory team the type of guidance and commitment found to be most helpful, agreeing and adhering to a schedule of meetings, and the importance of preparation for these;

- agreeing with one or more members of the supervisory team the amount of time to be devoted to the research and the timing and duration of any holiday periods (see Paragraph 61 below);
- analysing, with assistance from one or more members of the supervisory team, any initial or ongoing training needs with respect to research and generic/transferable skills, and participating in appropriate training activities as advised by one or more members of the supervisory team in order to meet these needs;
- maintaining the progress of the work in accordance with the research plan agreed with one or more members of the supervisory team, including submission of written material in sufficient time to allow for comment and discussion before proceeding to the next stage;
- providing regular statements on progress to the Research Office as part of the annual monitoring and review procedures (see paragraphs 61 to 71 below);
- depositing data from the research project as required in the appropriate University Open Access Repository;
- taking the initiative in raising problems or difficulties however trivial they may seem (this is a recognised aspect of the relationship between a research student and the supervisory team). Where difficulties are perceived (by the research student) to stem from inadequate supervision, this should be raised with the relevant Research Degree Coordinator and/or the Research Office as appropriate (see paragraph 95 below);
- where applicable, discussing with one or more members of the supervisory team any changes in learning support needs which may arise during the period of study;
- attending conferences and participating in staff and research student seminars, presenting work where appropriate and as guided by the supervisory team;
- being aware of the diverse cultural, social and educational backgrounds of fellow research students, recognising the actual and potential benefits brought to the learning experience;
- preparing papers for publication or presentation at conferences, as guided by the supervisory team;
- abiding by the institutional safety policy, observing safe working practices at all times, and following procedures prescribed by the supervisor;
- deciding when the thesis is to be submitted after taking due account of advice from one or more members of the supervisory team as appropriate;
- submitting the final thesis as set out in Appendix 3 of the Higher Degree Regulations. Theses may be subject to restriction only in exceptional circumstances – see Paragraph 94 below;

- In addition, it is the responsibility of the research student to conform to University policies, including but not limited to the University's Intellectual Property Policy, and the University's Research Ethics Policy (see Paragraph 30 above), consulting as appropriate with a relevant member of the supervisory team. All University policies can be found on the University website <https://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements/>

### **Responsibilities of the academic area**

39. Although much of the responsibility for ensuring that a student's research reaches a successful completion is shared between the research student and the supervisor(s), the academic area (under the aegis of the Research Degrees Group) has overall responsibility for the process. The academic area should satisfy itself that the appropriate requirements of the Higher Degree Regulations and this Code of Practice are met.
40. In addition, and as set out in paragraphs below, the academic area should ensure that research students are accepted into an environment which provides support and facilities for their overall learning and for their development as researchers.

### *Research Environment*

41. The research environment plays a key role in ensuring that research students have the best possible opportunities to develop and bring their research projects to fruition. The Introductory Section of this Code (paragraphs 1 and 2) sets out in full the factors involved in creating a robust environment, and academic areas should pay careful attention to these; these factors set the context for all areas covered by this Code. academic areas should strive to create an infrastructure that is capable of supporting the range of research students recruited. Where appropriate, this may be located in or among other educational institutions, or in a work setting (for example, in industry).

### *Facilities and Equipment*

42. Appropriate facilities and equipment to support students' research should be made available and explained in a clear statement to research students. These facilities should meet in full the expectations of the relevant Research Council(s) or funding bodies, and for research students will include as a minimum:
  - access to appropriate space to work, as indicated by the research student's academic needs analysis and by University policy
  - the provision of laboratory and technical support where appropriate;
  - if approved by application: office space, access to either a laptop or a desktop computer from the standard range; a request for a more powerful specification computer forms part of the initial Academic Needs Analysis discussion (see paragraph 25, above). Applications for office space are considered according to criteria (available on PGR Moodle). The Learning Resource Centre provides impermanent access to desktop computers/laptops;

- appropriate access to communication and photocopying facilities;
- opportunities to meet and network with other research students and researchers;
- appropriate library and other academic support services;
- opportunity to apply for funds to support training opportunities and for attendance at conferences and other relevant events.

Advice should be sought from the relevant services (e.g., Disability and Dyslexia Service) with regard to accessing any specialist equipment or assistive technology for research students who may need such support.

Part-time research students who are allocated office space with computer facilities would normally be assigned these facilities on a shared basis only. Part-time research students should also have access to other facilities and services as outlined above.

#### *Arrangements for Research Students based at a Distance*

43. Where an academic area supervises a research student based at a distance from the University, satisfactory arrangements must be put in place to ensure an equivalent experience to locally-based research students and that the student, the supervisor and the academic area are able to meet the responsibilities outlined above. See also paragraph 38 above on *Responsibilities of the Supervisory Team*. Such arrangements will include:
  - a specified number of meetings with members of the supervisory team as appropriate which may be undertaken by email, videoconferencing and other means of communication;
  - access to appropriate training and personal development activities by means of existing training opportunities or, alternatively, equivalent training which may include web-based training or other distance means;
  - opportunities to network and interact with staff and fellow research students, either face-to-face or through a virtual environment.
44. Arrangements should be agreed on an individual basis for each research student, and should be approved by the Director of Research, on behalf of Research Degrees Group, and kept under review as part of the annual review process. In some cases, it may be appropriate to consider agreeing joint supervision arrangements with another institution (see Regulations 6 and 10 of the Higher Degree Regulations).

#### *Feedback Mechanisms*

45. The University must have in place mechanisms to collect, review and, where appropriate, respond to feedback from research students, supervisors, examiners, external parties and others concerned with postgraduate research programmes. Separate arrangements should exist for obtaining individual and collective feedback and, when appropriate, for publishing

the results of collective feedback and actions taken. Timescales for the feedback and review cycle should be clearly specified and should occur at least annually, using mechanisms that allow for comparison and consistency across feedback and review cycles. The University strongly encourages research students to participate in appropriate national surveys, requesting research student feedback. The Research Office should also collect, review and, where appropriate, respond to research student feedback on their training activities. Wherever possible feedback should be gathered and processed anonymously, unless the research student's permission is otherwise given.

#### *Submission and Completion Rates*

46. The Research Office should monitor submission and completion rates for both full-time and part-time research students, and report on these in the annual quality monitoring cycle.

#### **Teaching and Demonstrating Duties**

47. Having completed and/or engaged with appropriate training (typically the Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education), research students may, wherever possible, be offered the opportunity to undertake teaching or demonstrating duties, provided this does not encroach on their studies. Academic areas should ensure that such activities, including preparation for marking, do not make excessive demands on the research student's time. As far as possible, the academic area should comply with guidelines laid down by the relevant Research Council and with the University's guidance on working hours.

#### **Publications**

48. Where appropriate, research students will be encouraged by their supervisor(s) to produce articles and papers for publication (or practice as research equivalents) during candidature. This work should not take precedence over the writing of the thesis and supervisors should give advice about an appropriate balance.

#### **Health and Safety**

49. It is the supervisory team's responsibility to advise the research student on safety procedures, especially if the research project entails working with dangerous equipment and materials or is being carried out in a laboratory environment. It is the research student's responsibility to abide by the University's Health and Safety policies, to comply with safe working practices at all times and to follow those procedures prescribed by the supervisor(s).

#### **Equal Opportunities**

50. It is the supervisory team's responsibility to ensure that *the [University's Equality and Diversity policy](#)* is taken into account in all aspects of the research student's experience as a research student.

## **Holidays and Absence due to Ill Health**

### *Holidays*

51. Full-time research students may take up to eight weeks holiday for each year of their candidature including public holidays and University closure days. For part-time research students this is applicable on a pro-rata basis. Research students should seek the prior agreement of their supervisory team (in practice this will normally be the Director of Studies) regarding the timing of holidays. Holidays should not normally be taken during the academic term. International research students on a relevant visa should refer to the International Student Advisory Service or to our website under International Students/Visas and Immigration.

### *Absence due to Ill Health*

52. For periods of illness longer than five days, and for research students in receipt of a medical certificate confirming that they are unable to pursue their studies for medical reasons, research students must discuss the impact of the illness on their studies with their Director of Studies or designated co-ordinator of their supervisory team (see the University's Student Attendance and Absence Policy which also provides information about contact points for international students). This also applies to part-time research students on a pro-rata basis. Research Council funded research students should check the terms of their studentship with regard to advising the Council of any absence due to illness and the provision of a medical certificate. It is good practice for research students to keep their Director of Studies or coordinator advised of any short periods of illness, particularly if these are frequent, so that any potential impact on progress can be identified and any additional support provided if thought necessary.

## **Progress Monitoring**

### *Monitoring and Supporting Research Student Progress*

53. The University will have in place, and bring to the attention of research students and relevant staff, clearly defined mechanisms for monitoring and supporting research student progress.
- a) Supervisory teams and research students should establish a mutually agreed series of meetings, both formal and informal, to discuss progress and any problems arising.
  - b) The University should have clear mechanisms for feeding back to the research student information on progress and on actions that are taken in response to any problems encountered.
  - c) When reviewing progress, supervisors should routinely assess whether the support needs of their research students are being effectively met. The outcomes of supervisory meetings and any training or development activities undertaken by the student shall be recorded in the Personal Progress Log which will be considered in the Annual Review along with annual Personal Progress Reports and upon the submission of the thesis for examination.

- d) The Research Office will provide guidance on keeping appropriate records of the outcomes of meetings and related activities to research students and supervisors. The research student and supervisor(s) must submit a written report which will be used to monitor the research student's progress and to identify any academic needs and any general issues arising. The report by the research student should summarise progress made since the last report, if applicable. The report by the supervisor(s) should include a statement on the likelihood of the research student completing the thesis within the required time limit. Any particular problems encountered by the research student, (e.g., access to resources or facilities or other additional disability-related or language support requirements) should be indicated in this report and appropriate action taken. The report should also indicate whether any additional support requirements or facilities already being provided for a particular research student are continuing to meet that research student's needs, or if any adjustments for the coming period are required.
- e) There should be formal monitoring and consideration of progress reports at key points during a research student's candidature by an appropriate panel (as specified by the University). The target dates of these formal review points should be made clear to both research students and supervisors by the University but, as a minimum, they should occur on an annual basis. In addition, there should be an initial meeting between the student and their supervisory team within three months of the commencement of the research degree in which training and development needs and the provision of appropriate facilities are discussed.
- f) The University should ensure that the following are clear to research students and supervisors from the beginning of the programme:
  - i. the implications of the possible outcomes of the review meetings;
  - ii. the criteria to be used for making decisions about the extension, suspension or termination of a research student's registration;
  - iii. the circumstances in which research student appeal mechanisms may be used.

#### *Unsatisfactory Progress*

- 54. It is the responsibility of the Director of Studies to inform the research student of unsatisfactory progress as soon as this becomes apparent. Unsatisfactory progress may include a lack of engagement with the project, repeated failure to meet agreed milestones or attend scheduled meetings, to maintain accepted professional standards, or to engage in appropriate/required training and personal development activities. Formal procedures to consider unsatisfactory progress are provided in Appendix 4 of the Regulations.
- 55. If discussion between the research student and appropriate members of the supervisory team fails to resolve the issue, the Chair of the Research Degrees Group may instigate the procedures laid out in Appendix 4 of the Regulations (Research Degree Candidature: Procedures for Circumstances that may lead to Withdrawal or Termination). The research student may appeal against the decision by using the procedure set out in the University Academic Regulations, Section 11: *Assessment of Students*.

## Major Review

56. All research students register on the programme of their intended award. Students on the PhD programme are required to undertake and pass a Major Review during their candidature. For full-time students this will typically be in the second year of candidature, and for part-time students will typically be in the third, fourth, fifth or sixth year of candidature.

### *Major Review Panel constitution and operation*

57. The recommendation to pass Major Review will be made by a panel constituted for the purpose. The Major Review panel will consist of the full supervisory team and a member of academic staff who has had no direct involvement in the research and who will act as an independent 'assessor'. In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of the Research Degrees Group may approve an independent assessor who is external to the University.
58. The Major Review meeting combines the normal annual review with a substantive review of progress against the criteria outlined below. In addition to the preliminary annual progress report the student will submit to the Director of Studies a portfolio of academic work (e.g., draft chapters of thesis; see clause 68 of Code of Practice: *Supporting evidence*). The preliminary annual progress report and portfolio of work should be submitted together at least two weeks ahead of the meeting.
59. The agenda for the meeting will include:
- Assessment of the portfolio of work (led by independent assessor, discussion with all panel members)
  - The remainder of the agenda is led by Director of Studies, the assessor may offer comments for consideration by the panel and student:
  - Provide an opportunity for the student to raise any issues about their research experience
  - Provide feedback to the research student on their research, personal development and performance
  - Set clear goals for the coming year's study
  - Support supervisors and students to maintain and develop a dynamic research community.

### *Criteria for pass of Major Review*

60. To pass the Major Review, the following criteria must be met:
- a) the research student must have demonstrated the ability to manage the research project, to become proficient in the special field of research involved, and to achieve success at PhD level given adequate motivation and perseverance;



- b) the project being undertaken is of sufficient scope, originality and theoretical interest to constitute a genuine contribution to the subject in the form of the understanding of a problem, the advancement of knowledge or the generation of new ideas.

### *Supporting Evidence*

61. The Major Review panel making the recommendation must have reviewed a sufficient body of written work in order to make a judgement on the criteria noted in paragraph 68 above. This body of work should include:

- an overview of the research problem and rationale for the project;
- a substantial literature review;
- well-developed plans for data collection and analysis and/or practice as research equivalents.

The student should normally be in a position to present a dossier of about 15,000-20,000 words which would typically include draft chapters, supplemented by plans, appendices, bibliography, publications, conference papers, etc. The Research Degree Coordinator can be consulted to clarify expectations.

### *The Recommendation*

62. A recommendation from the Major Review panel must be made to the Research Degrees Group which is charged with responsibility for approving continuing progress on the PhD programme. The recommendation should be supported by all members of the transfer/Major Review panel or committee. If the recommendation is not to pass the Major Review, the research student must be given a written report giving a statement of the reasons, guidance regarding any ways in which they might reach the required standard, and a date for a second Major Review meeting when the recommendation might be reviewed. If the student should fail the Major Review at the second attempt they will either be transferred to the MPhil programme or have their registration terminated. The research student may appeal against the decision by using the procedure set out in the [University Academic Regulations](#).
63. Research students who have been successful in passing their Major Review should receive written feedback on the review process highlighting, where appropriate, areas of particular strength as well as any potential areas of concern or development.

### **Transfer from MPhil to PhD**

64. Students registered for the degree of MPhil wishing to transfer to the PhD programme must undertake and pass a Major Review. This must occur at least six months before submission. Transfer from MPhil to PhD should be recommended only after a formal review of the research topic, of its suitability for development into a PhD thesis, and of the research student's ability and progress. Research students transferring in from another institution may not normally submit the thesis earlier than 12 months from the date of transfer to the

University (see section 9 of the *Regulations for the Degrees of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy*).

### **Transfer of PhD to MPhil**

65. Transfer from PhD to MPhil may be permitted at any time prior to the submission of the thesis.

### **Transfer to Nominal Registration**

66. An MPhil or PhD research student may be allowed to transfer to nominal registration when the Director of Studies can confirm that the research is substantially complete and the thesis is being written up. The Research Office will confirm the minimum period of candidature has been completed and that Major Review has taken place (in the case of a PhD research student). See the Higher Degree Regulations for requirements in relation to nominal registration. Normally the supervisor(s) will be able to predict the likely completion date before agreeing to transfer the research student to nominal registration. Applications to transfer to nominal registration must be submitted to the Research Office.
67. A research student may remain in nominal registration for up to one year initially at which point the position should be reviewed by the Research Office in liaison with the supervisory team. After a number of months in nominal registration a fee becomes payable; for FT students this is after six months, and for PT students this is after twelve months. Time spent in nominal registration will count towards the total period of candidature. A research student returning from suspension may not transfer to nominal registration until at least two months after their return from suspension (see Higher Degree Regulations).

### **Production and Submission of the Thesis**

68. The requirements for the production of the thesis for submission laid down in the document Completion of Research Degree Candidature (Appendix 3 to Higher Degree Regulations) should be followed. Attention is also drawn to the following:

#### *Decision to Submit*

69. The final decision on the content of the dissertation and when to submit it rests with the candidate. The research student should take note of supervision advice but this advice should not be taken as an indication that the final thesis will fulfil the requirements of the examiners. A supervisor must inform the Research Office in writing if the research student submits without their agreement. This information will not be made known to the examiners but may be referred to in any subsequent discussions about the outcome of the examination, particularly where failure leads to an appeal.

#### *Academic Integrity*

70. The University's Academic Regulations state that research students are required to complete their work, and where relevant their professional practice, in accordance with the principles

and practices set out in the Academic Regulations under 'Academic Malpractice'. In particular, research students should avoid breaches of academic integrity such as plagiarism, cheating, falsification and recycling. Details setting out the University's procedures for handling suspected breaches of academic integrity by postgraduate research students are available on the University's website in the Academic Regulations. The University has adopted *Turnitin* for all its students and all research students can submit their work to *Turnitin* at key points of their research degree programme. Final submission of the thesis is made via *Turnitin*, and the supervisory team is required to sign a Statement on the Originality of Work for PGR Degrees shortly after the submission of the thesis for examination. This form, along with the Turnitin report, will be viewed by examiners prior to the viva exam.

### *During Candidature*

71. If, during the period of study, the research student feels that the research project is not proceeding satisfactorily for reasons outside their control, or that an effective working relationship with a supervisor is not being established or maintained, they should first consult another member of the supervisory team, or their Research Degree Coordinator Director of Research. The Chaplaincy and Student Support Services are also available as a source of pastoral support for such matters. If such discussions do not improve matters, research students should refer to the University's Academic Regulations for information on making a complaint. The Regulations explain in detail the procedure for submitting a complaint, as well as providing information about using mediation as an alternative informal method of dispute resolution. Research students can obtain free, independent and confidential advice about submitting a complaint from the Academic Quality and Standards Service.

### *Appeals Procedures*

72. Following a decision made by a relevant body, the research student may appeal if they can produce evidence of one or more of the grounds outlined within the University's Academic Regulations. Research students are advised to consult with the Students' Union and/or Academic Quality and Standards Service which can provide free, independent and confidential advice as well as representation in such matters. See also the Higher Degree Regulations.

[END]

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<sup>1</sup> Regulations for MPhil/PhD Degrees are available on the University's website and the University's Intranet.  
<http://www.chi.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-statements>

<sup>2</sup> taken from the Quality Assurance Agency's UK Quality Code for Higher Education 'The Frameworks for Higher Education Qualifications of UK Degree-Awarding Bodies', October 2014.

## UNIVERSITY OF CHICHESTER HIGHER DEGREE REGULATIONS (2025-2026)

### Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision

#### Appendix 1. Guidance on Contact Hours and Supervisory Support

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#### **FROM STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE POLICY (Policy in current Generic Student Handbook)**

a. The lead supervisor for a postgraduate research student, known as the Director of Studies is responsible for monitoring progress. The responsibilities of the supervisor are described in the Code of Practice. Expected contacts would include meetings with the supervisor(s), research training event e.g., seminar, workshop), a viva, and submission of work as agreed with supervisory team. Postgraduate Research Students studying on the MPhil/PhD programme accredited by the University of Chichester should adhere to the University's Higher Degree Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision.

The Research Office will advise Directors of Studies if any of their students are studying under a UKVI, Student Route Visa in order that attendance is monitored in compliance with UK Visas and Immigration regulations. If a Director of Studies believes a student, studying under a UKVI, Student Route Visa, is no longer attending or engaged with their programme of study (as per the defined contacts in para a. above) and has in effect withdrawn this must be communicated as soon as possible to the Research Office who will advise Academic Registry without delay in order that this can be reported to UK Visas and Immigration within the stipulated timescales (ref para 1 vii above).

#### **ESTABLISHED ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS (Also found in PGR HANDBOOK)**

##### **Formal supervision meetings with supervisor(s)**

10 FT/5 PT per year (at least 3/2 On site; others can be by Skype, telephone etc.) It is recommended that each supervisory meeting lasts approx. one hour.

##### **Annual progress meeting with supervisory team (to include review of training/development)**

1 per year (on site unless this is not feasible)

##### **Major Review with supervisory team and assessor**

Once only during candidature for PhD students (on site unless this is not feasible)

##### **Attendance at University and/or departmental research events**

At least 1 per year (e.g. Research Conference or PhD Research Day)

##### **Attendance at external research events**

1 per year (optional)

##### **Other expectations of attendance at area/departmental level**

To be agreed at outset of study

##### **Formal training**

Induction, Preparing for Major Review, Preparing for Submission, Preparing for Viva

#### **GUIDANCE ON SUPERVISION WORKLOAD**

The figures below are intended as a guidance only. Job design and work allocation will vary between departments and between different roles due to the nature of the subject areas and teaching requirements.

Decisions on allocating workload will be a matter for Heads of academic areas to decide in agreement with staff and will take into account a balance of responsibilities and activities across a number of areas. The following guidelines may be useful when appointing external supervisors.

Active Registration FT	It is recommended that 48 hours per year are distributed across the supervisory team, inclusive of the required contact time/ supervisory meetings
Active Registration PT	It is recommended that 24 hours per year are distributed across the supervisory team, inclusive of the required contact time/ supervisory meetings
Nominal Registration FT	No substantial supervision should be undertaken during this period as student is writing up. It will be necessary for the supervisory team to undertake activities such as arranging mock viva and reading draft of the thesis and attending the viva voce examination. It is reasonably expected that this make take up to 24 hours per year across the supervisory team.
Nominal Registration PT	No substantial supervision should be undertaken during this period as student is writing up. It will be necessary for the supervisory team to undertake activities such as arranging mock viva and reading draft of the thesis and attending the viva voce examination. It is reasonably expected that this make take up to 24 hours per year across the supervisory team.
Post Examinations Phase - Minor	Typical time frame 1 month. It is reasonably expected that this make take up to 6 hours across the supervisory team. An individual supervisor may be allocated this task.
Post Examinations Phase Major	Typical Time frame 6 months. It is reasonably expected that this make take up to 6 hours across the supervisory team. An individual supervisor may be allocated this task.
Post examinations Phase - Resubmission	The supervisory team along with the Heads of academic areas to decide in agreement the amount of time to be allocated to this endeavour. It is expected that this period will be similar to the nominal registration period with regard to workload unless there are substantial amendments required which require supervision of research.
Formal Supervision meetings FT	It is suggested that each student have up to 10 formal supervision meetings, or equivalent, per year, with supervisor(s) lasting approx. 1 hour whilst in active candidature.

Formal Supervision meetings PT	It is suggested that each student have up to 5 formal supervision meetings, or equivalent, per year, with supervisor(s) lasting approx. 1 hour whilst in active candidature
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## UNIVERSITY OF CHICHESTER HIGHER DEGREE REGULATIONS (2025-2026)

### Code of Practice for Research Candidature and Supervision

#### Appendix 2. Guidelines for Video-conferencing PhD Viva Voce Examinations

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Videoconferencing PhD Viva Voce examinations may be held at the candidate's request, provided all parties are agreeable to these arrangements and all necessary safeguards are in place to facilitate the smooth running of the examination, namely:

- a) Video conferencing may be used only with the agreement of the candidate, both examiners, and the Research Office. The consent of all involved must be obtained prior to the viva voce examination.
- b) Having requested and agreed to a viva voce examination involving videoconferencing the candidate will not be permitted to use this as grounds for appeal, unless the circumstances of technical failure or other unforeseen eventualities beyond the control of the Board of Examiners were deemed to have adversely affected the candidate's performance and these were identified at the end of the examination.
- c) All viva voce examinations which occur by video conference must have an Independent Chair.
- d) We recommend that the supervisor and student have a virtual meeting before the viva whilst the examiners are meeting to reduce anxiety and simulate the student and supervisor waiting outside the meeting room in a normal viva. This should be repeated at the end when the examiners and independent chair are discussing the outcome.
- e) The examiners, independent chair, supervisor and candidate are advised to have a test meeting with Research Office to confirm that the video-conferencing system is fully functional for all parties, to enable the minimum standard requirements of such an examination.
- f) The examiners will have a virtual meeting one hour beforehand (Preliminary meeting) to discuss the questions they are going to ask and the order in which they ask them. The examiners and the independent chair will all have access to this list of questions.

- g) Any additional written materials or visual aids must be provided to the examiners in advance of the examination.
- h) Reference to page numbers throughout the examination will be required, to ensure there are no misunderstandings. The student should be encouraged to ask clarification of which page/paragraph is being referred to if they lose track.
- i) The independent chair and supervisor will mute their microphone during the viva to avoid background noise and will only unmute it when they need to intervene.
- j) All parties, apart from supervisor if invited, must be visible during the examination, and the candidate must be visible at all times during the examination.
- k) All remote viva examinations must be conducted using visual as well as audio interaction. It is not possible for a viva examination to be conducted with audio only or by phone.
- l) The content and conduct of the video conference examination should be the same as a normal viva voce examination.
- m) If communication is broken during the examination and a connection cannot be re- established, examination must be terminated and rescheduled.
- n) Any rescheduled examination should take place within one month of the original viva.
- o) If communication is broken during the examination and a connection cannot be re- established, the examiners must decide how much of the viva voce examination was completed at the point the connection was lost and what, therefore, should be covered in the re-scheduled viva examination.
- p) If communication is broken towards the end of an examination, and examiners can jointly agree that further examination would not change their decision, the viva may be concluded and the candidate notified of the examiners' joint recommendation. This should be detailed in the Examiner's report and account should be made of any content that was potentially missed after the break in communication.
- q) Examiners should be prepared to offer further counsel once the examination has ended. It is important to keep in mind that the candidate will require support in the event of an undesirable outcome, and therefore sufficient support should be offered by the examination team and supervisors.
- r) Examiners should close the audio and visual connection of the candidate whilst they discuss the examination outcomes and reach their joint decision. It is advised that the candidate should be informed of the approximate time that this discussion will take and when to be on hand to discuss the examiners' decision.

- s) Candidates should be informed of the outcome of their viva voce examination as soon as possible and the procedures for outcomes and corrections should be explained to the candidate.
- t) Outcomes are the same as normal viva examinations and the examiners are required to file a joint report.
- u) The examiners should make explicit reference to the fact that the viva was undertaken through video-conference in their examination report.