CODE OF PRACTICE FOR SUPERVISORS AND RESEARCH STUDENTS

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THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH
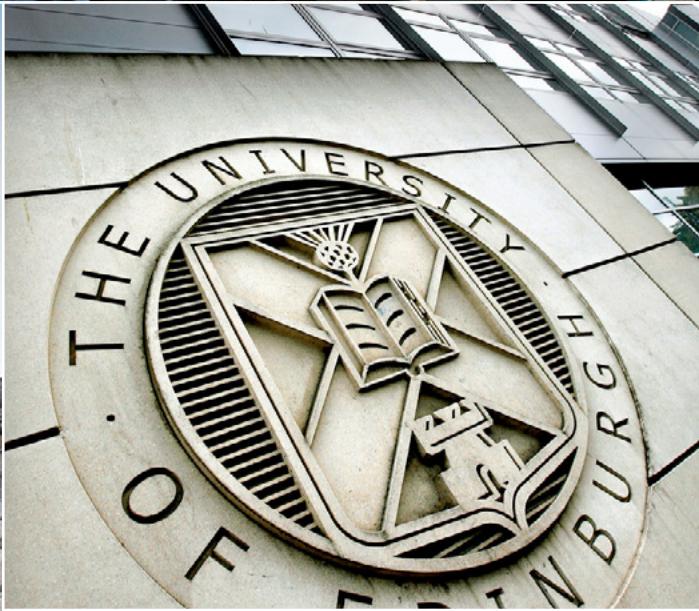
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1.   Introduction

The University aims to foster a vibrant, successful and interactive research community that generates ideas and discoveries, creates new fields of knowledge and makes a difference to the societal, cultural, environmental, health and wealth development of Scottish, UK and global communities.

Research students have a major role to play in these aims. To this end, the University seeks to provide research students with an exceptional and distinctive experience that prepares them to make significant contributions to knowledge during and beyond their period of candidature in the University.

1.1   Scope of the Code of Practice

In placing research excellence and student experience at the forefront, this Code provides guidance and practical advice for both supervisors and research students. It sets out the expected standards for both students and staff, recognising the diversity of contexts and practices across the University. The Code should be read in conjunction with the postgraduate regulations set out in
- The University's Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study
- The Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees.

For MSc and Masters by Research degrees that include a significant taught element and that have their own Board of Examiners please refer to
- The Code of Practice for Taught Postgraduate Programmes.

The Code of Practice is consistent with the QAA Code of Practice Chapter B11: Research Degrees.

1.2   Research Degree Standards

This Code of Practice sets out the University's standards for its research degree programmes. The University Degree Regulations provide further details about types of awards, their key characteristics, and the conditions for awarding the degrees.

1.2.1 Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes

This Code refers to Postgraduate Research Degree Programmes and includes all research-based postgraduate programmes offered by the University of Edinburgh:
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
- Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
- Masters by Research
- Doctorates and other research degrees named according to subject.

1.2.2 Joint PhD Degrees

The University supports fully integrated joint degrees as agreed formally with partner institutions. These are degrees for which there is a single award between partner universities with equal quality assurance, standards, and examination procedures. Joint PhD programmes enable doctoral students to embark on jointly-supervised research degrees (section 2.1.7). Students enrolled in jointly-awarded PhD programmes have access to two research environments and cultures, as well as training and facilities in two research-intensive universities.

1.2.3 Prescribed Period of Study

Students undertake their study over the period prescribed by the postgraduate research degree programme in which they are enrolled.

- Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study

Variations to the period of candidature are outlined in this Code, including how to apply for concessions such as interruptions of study and extensions to the prescribed period of study. The period of candidature begins from registration in the degree programme in the University and ends with the submission of the thesis for examination, though in the case of PhD and MPhil degrees the examiners may recommend that the student undertake a further period of study or a period to implement corrections after the examination.

1.2.4 The Thesis

The thesis is the final output of the research process, developed over the duration of the student's candidature. The form of the thesis depends on the research degree programme in which the student is enrolled, and will require one or more of the following:

- A written dissertation
- Assessed essays
- A portfolio of music compositions
- Artefacts, artworks and other practice-based outputs
- Design work including studies, sketches and maquettes
- Placement reports
- Documentary film
- A portfolio of publications

The research degree programme or supervisory team may also require students to undertake and pass some coursework, as outlined in the relevant Degree Regulations and Programme Handbooks.

1.3   Key Responsibilities

1.3.1 Supervisory Team

The team should contain at least two members, a Principal Supervisor (in some cases referred to as the Lead Supervisor) and Co-supervisor or Assistant Supervisor depending on the supervision model. The supervisory team supports the student's candidature. In some cases several Co-supervisors will be appointed. For MPhil and PhD candidates the supervisory team will meet as a group with the student at least once a year: as part of a progression review towards the end of the first year and at least once a year after that. This relationship continues from registration until the end of the student's candidature. Supervisors are responsible for supervision of the student's candidature until the final thesis is submitted fulfilling any requirements of the examiners.

1.3.2 Principal Supervisor

The Principal Supervisor is responsible for providing help and advice to the student on (see also section 2.3.2):

- Research training
- Choice of topic
- Organising the research
- Identifying any specific training needs
- Feedback on written work and any other component of the research
- Pastoral support.

The Principal Supervisor meets regularly with the student, leads the student through the process of producing the thesis and its examination, reminds the student of time constraints, and checks that the thesis conforms to the University's requirements. Meetings may be conducted online or via teleconferencing. The supervisor will be able to offer advice and direct the student to sources of nformation about future careers. Comprehensive careers guidance is available from the Careers Service.

1.3.3 Postgraduate Director

The University's teaching and research activity is organised into Schools. Each School has a Postgraduate Director (or Head of Graduate School) responsible for postgraduate matters in the School. Amongst other duties, the Postgraduate Director will:

- Monitor the progress of all research students within the School
- Engage with the formal annual review process for each student
- Ensure that research students receive the help and advice they require
- Help students and supervisors to resolve problems with student progress
- Consult with all supervisors in the School on issues as they arise
- Advance policies about postgraduate matters in the School.

1.3.4 Subject Area Postgraduate Adviser

Large schools may also have Postgraduate Advisers who are responsible for subject areas within the School. Postgraduate Advisers fulfil the Postgraduate Director's duties in the subject area and support the Postgraduate Director.

1.3.5 College Postgraduate Academic Management

Each School is positioned in one of the three Colleges of the University. Each College has a committee or board responsible for overseeing postgraduate research within the College and for maintaining academic standards. The College Postgraduate Committee or College Board of Examiners:

- Approves extensions and interruptions of study
- Approves concessions to the regulations such as the language the thesis is written in and the length of thesis
- Approves the appointment of examiners
- Approves any conditions recommended by the examiners
- Decides whether to accept the advice of the examiners on the awarding of the degree
- Considers policy issues that affect postgraduate education in the College.

The Committee or Board may also implement some of its responsibilities through subcommittees, a Dean or committee chair. The Committee or Board also offers advice to relevant Senate Committees.

1.3.6 Senate Committees

The Senatus Academicus (Senate) is the University's overarching academic body. The University's governance structure includes several Senate committees. Committees dealing with postgraduate research are:

- The Senatus Researcher Experience Committee
- The Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee
- The Senatus Quality Assurance Committee.

These committees include academic staff from all Colleges and representatives from the Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA). They are convened by the Assistant Principal of Researcher

Development, the Assistant Principal of Learning and Development and the Assistant Principal Academic Standards and Quality Assurance respectively.

1.3.7 Support Staff

Each School and College also has an administrative support team. Amongst other duties they are responsible for handling inquiries, admissions, record keeping, scholarship applications, and applications for interruptions and extensions. The administrative team also supports the role of the Director or Head of Graduate School. They also provide a point of contact to help with routine queries on pastoral support.

2   The student's relationship with the University

2.1   Finding a Supervisor and Research Topic

The nature of the student's research interests or the proposed project will affect the membership and composition of the supervisory team. School Postgraduate Directors assess and discuss applications with potential supervisors prior to the student's registration at the University.

2.1.1 Choice of Topic and Supervision

A Postgraduate Director, Postgraduate Adviser, supervisor, or potential supervisor will meet with the student to agree the topic area and identify supervisor(s) before or soon after the student's arrival. This advice applies also to students who as part of their research degree undertake taught courses at the start of their candidature. Some students will have agreed their topic before recruitment.

2.1.2 Appointment of Supervisor

Academic staff who have already served as Assistant Supervisor or Co-Supervisor are eligible to serve as Principal Supervisors. The University provides training and support for supervisors, and requires attendance every five years on a College supervisor briefing session. Each student will work under the guidance of at least two supervisors appointed by the College Postgraduate Committee. There are two types of supervisory arrangement:
- Principal Supervisor plus Assistant Supervisor(s)
- Co-Supervisors, one of whom is designated the Lead Supervisor. Schools are responsible for ensuring that supervisors and Co-supervisors have sufficient time to meet their responsibilities as supervisors. In assessing the supervisory arrangement, Schools and Colleges will also take account of:
- Whether the supervisors are in part-time or full time employment
- The duration of staff contracts.

2.1.3 Principal or Lead Supervisor

Supervisory teams will contain at least two people. The School will ensure that the supervisory team is in place within two months of registration. The Principal Supervisor (or Lead Supervisor if the student is Co-Supervised) must be appointed prior to the student's registration. The Principal or Lead Supervisor has the primary responsibility for supervision. Throughout the rest of this document the term "Principal Supervisor" will be used for both Principal and Lead Supervisor.

2.1.4 Assistant Supervisor

The role of the Assistant Supervisor entails less responsibility than the Principal Supervisor, but in some cases may require closer day-to-day involvement in the student's research. If necessary, the School will appoint an Assistant Supervisor within two months of registration.

2.1.5 Advisers

In some research programmes other staff members will be involved in an informal advisory capacity, especially if specialised equipment is to be used. It is the duty of the Principal Supervisor to ensure that these informal advisers are prepared to undertake this work and to take responsibility for instruction and safety.

2.1.6 School Postgraduate Advisers

Schools may appoint an individual or group to support the Postgraduate Director in providing impartial advice to students and academic staff on:
- Issues relating to supervision
- Space and facility needs
- Complaints.

Such an advisory group will be proactive in identifying and resolving issues, and may include experts from outside the School. The group will also function as a means of introducing students to a wider cohort of staff in the School.

2.1.7 Collaboration with Associated Institutions

In some cases research projects span across several Schools and Colleges in the University and involve other universities and organisations. The University of Edinburgh has collaborative agreements in several research disciplines with partners nationally and worldwide, not all of whom are eligible to award degrees. Agreements are confirmed by the University and managed by Schools and Colleges.

2.1.8 Review of Topic and Supervisory Arrangements

Students on postgraduate degree programmes that are longer than one year full time will undergo an annual progression review. The first progression review is held within nine to 12 months of enrolment and in subsequent years at nine to 12 months until thesis submission.

The student will present a written report as part of the review (see also section 3.2.1). The progression review provides the opportunity for the review committee and supervisory team to assess the candidate's potential as a researcher and the suitability of topic before confirming that the student can continue into the second and third years of their programme of study. It also provides an opportunity for candidates to assess their research and to develop and refine their research topic. The possible outcomes of this review include continuing with candidature, revising the report, repeating the review process, changing to another degree, or discontinuation of candidature (see also section 3.2.1). Supervisors will provide written feedback to the student as part of the review process.
- Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees

2.2   Welcome and Induction of new students

Induction events are run at the University, College, School and programme level. As well as welcoming students, the University and College induction events provide an introduction to the institution and its student support services. School inductions compliment the University induction programme. Induction will introduce students to University and School provision. Induction events will be timetabled to occur at key entry points for the majority of students. Students will be assigned to the next available induction event.

Induction events inform students about:
- The University's administrative structures and how postgraduate research degree programmes fit into these
- University-wide support services, both academic and pastoral, available to postgraduate research students, including those offered by the Students' Association
- Academic support services, in particular library and computing services, and College or School arrangements for access and training in the use of these facilities
- Opportunities for further training and skills development
- Pastoral support within Colleges and Schools.

Local inductions introduce students to supervising staff, research colleagues, the learning and working environment, the Library and other resources. They also provide an opportunity for research students to ask questions about their programme.

Schools will carry out inductions for new students that will include:
- An introduction to the University's administrative structures and how the postgraduate research programmes fit into these
- A tour of the work environment and relevant facilities
- An introduction to key staff
- An introduction to other students, including social opportunities which allow students to network
- An introduction to the university library system and relevant IT systems
- Health and safety training (see section 8.1).

2.3   Supervision of the Research Project

2.3.1 Deciding on a Research Project

Students and supervisors will decide on the topic of research before the student commences their study at the University or in the early months of study. The project will depend on:
- The student's background and interests
- The student's motivation for the topic
- The supervisors' areas of expertise
- Availability of the supervisors during important periods of the candidature
- Available resources
- Suitability for the research degree the student is enrolled in
- Availability of relevant training
- Whether the project can be completed within the prescribed period of study
- Any requirements stipulated by studentship funders such as research councils and doctoral training centres or partnerships
- Conditions relating to study or examination specified in the letter of admission, for example the acquisition of computing skills or knowledge of a foreign language.

Close contact between supervisors and students is essential. The frequency of meetings will depend on the subject area, and the stage of the student's training. Meetings may occur weekly in the first few months of candidature in order to scope and define the research project. Part time students should be prepared for a programme of frequent meetings at the initial stages particularly in light of scheduling constraints and the student's commitments outside of their research.

2.3.2 Responsibilities of the Principal Supervisor

The Principal supervisor will:
- Ensure that School facilities necessary for the project are available
- Facilitate contact with informal supervisors and advisers where necessary
- Arrange regular meetings with the student at which all matters relating to the student's research can be discussed, including feedback on written work
- Identify the student's development needs at the start of the degree and review and update these throughout the student's candidature
- Advise the student on drawing up a research plan, thesis structure and a timetable for completion of the work
- Help the student prepare for the progression review where required
- Complete and submit on time to the appropriate postgraduate contact according to College guidelines, and complete all relevant reports required by Research Councils and other funding bodies, and ensure their transmission (see also section 3.2 Monitoring Student Progress)
- Provide advice on pastoral support as well as academic matters so that problems can be identified early on and appropriate steps taken to obtain concessions where needed, such as interruptions of study, absences from the University, leaves of absence and extensions (see also section 3.3)
- Offer advice on other forms of output from the student's research, such as publication in journals and conference proceedings
- Encourage students to develop transferable skills and to attend appropriate training courses.

The plan for completion of the research will include specific research goals, their timing, sequence, and interdependencies. The supervisor will monitor the student's progress against this plan, along with any revisions.

Pastoral responsibility includes being alert to problems that might affect the student's ability to work effectively. The supervisor needs to be aware of the facilities that the University offers for the support of students, such as the University Health Service, the Student Disability Service, the Student Counselling Service, the Advice Place, Careers Services, the Chaplaincy and the International Office (see also section 1.3.2).

2.3.3 Absence of the Principal Supervisor

Schools will make alternative arrangements for supervision in the event that the Principal Supervisor is absent for more than six consecutive weeks, including during University vacation periods. The student will be notified formally of any such arrangements.

2.3.4 Role of Assistant Supervisor

The role of the Assistant Supervisor is to:
- Support the approach to the main thesis topic addressed by the student and agreed with the Principal Supervisor (rather than offer an alternative approach), for example provide

complementary expertise, such as specialised knowledge of a particular technique, or depending on the work context, provide day-to-day supervision in some cases
- Provide support and assistance if the Principal Supervisor is absent
- Meet with the student periodically
- Follow the student's progress
- Be fully involved in the annual reviews of the student's progress and comment on and sign the student's annual report form.

The role of the Assistant Supervisor will be regularised, agreed and understood by the supervisory team, the Postgraduate Director or Head of Graduate School and the student.

2.3.5 Role of Co-supervisors

The School may decide that two supervisors are necessary to support the research. This will be agreed at the time of the student's admission to candidature or whenever it becomes apparent that the research requires interdisciplinary support. One of the supervisors will assume the role of Principal Supervisor. The Principal Supervisor and Co-supervisor have equal roles and responsibilities for supervision, but the Principal Supervisor will be responsible for applications for concessions (for example interruptions and extensions), ensure that monitoring forms are completed, and meet other administrative responsibilities.

Both supervisors will assist the student to identify and define the topic of research, either before the student arrives at the University or soon after. If the interdisciplinary nature of the research topic develops later then the Principal Supervisor will consult with the student, identify an appropriate Co-supervisor, and arrange the terms of the working relationship. Where the Principal and Co-Supervisors are from different Schools, the Principal Supervisor will obtain approval for the arrangement from the Postgraduate Directors of both Schools.

The Principal and Co-Supervisor are jointly responsible to the Postgraduate Director in the School in which the student is registered for the duties set out in section 2.3.2 and both will meet regularly with the student.

2.3.6 Supervisors in Associated Institutions

Staff employed by Associated Institutions may serve as supervisors. An employee of an Associated Institution may serve as a Principal Supervisor if:
- The student is working full time in the Associated Institution
- The Co-supervisor or Assistant Supervisor(s) are University employees
- The Principal Supervisor from the Associated Institution is prepared to take on supervisory responsibilities as if they were working within the University and complies with the roles and responsibilities outlined in this Code of Practice
- The arrangement is approved by the College Committee.

The University Co-supervisor and the Postgraduate Director will ensure that the Principal Supervisor from the Associated Institution has read the University's procedures and Codes of Practice. The University Co-supervisor, Postgraduate Director and College committee with responsibility for postgraduate matters will monitor student progress through formal annual reporting. Students working in an Associated Institution have the same rights and responsibilities as those working in a University School. They will also be subject to any additional rules of the Associated Institution.

2.4 International Students

The University welcomes international students. Advice is available to assist international students adjust to life away from home, friends and families. The International Office, the Student Counselling Service, the Chaplaincy and the Advice Place provide confidential help and advice. Students can also seek advice from supervisors, and students in Halls of Residence can also seek help and advice from the wardens.

2.4.1 English Language Requirements

The University requires that instructions, correspondence, teaching, and examinations are conducted in English. The written thesis and oral examinations of research degrees are in English (or Gaelic in some cases). Students must be able to communicate fluently with their supervisors.

The University may require students whose first language is not English to undertake a diagnostic English test in Edinburgh prior to registration to assess training needs. Students who are required to take this test will be notified by their College on admission. The Test of English at Matriculation (TEAM) may find that the student needs essential or strongly recommended English language tuition. If so the student will be strongly advised to undertake remedial tuition. The Principal Supervisor will advise the student of the importance of remedial English language training and encourage the student to attend. The language test is rigorous to ensure that any remedial action specified is appropriate, to avoid serious problems in writing the thesis.

Students who come to the UK under the Tier 4 visa route must adhere to at least the minimum standards as set out by the Immigration Rules prior to admission.

2.4.2 Immigration and Visa Advice

Immigration advice is regulated by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner. By law, immigration advice can only be provided by specifically named staff who meet the required competencies and work in accordance with the Code of Standards as defined by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner. International students should only consult with staff in the International Office for visa and immigration advice. There are serious implications if a student needs to stay in the UK and fails to renew their visa before it expires, or if a student changes their circumstances (for example, changes of location of study, length of programme, or breaks in study). Adjustments to candidate status can take several months, so students requiring help should seek it well in advance of making the change.

- International Office

2.5   Facilities

The University provides central library facilities, an email account, shared access to computers and network access for all students. Students can expect adequate lighting, heating and ventilation in the spaces in which they work. Schools are responsible for providing study accommodation and equipment.

2.5.1 Provision in Schools and Departments

Each subject area has its own provision, which may include:
- Bench space
- Dedicated study space
- A desk
- Shelving or space in a bookcase
- Filing space
- Lockable storage
- Local access to the computer network
- A collection point for mail
- Research data file store
- Research premises
- Specialised equipment
- Consumables.

Schools will also provide for postgraduate research students:
- A postgraduate notice board, information point or electronic information point
- Access to a shared photocopier, fax machines and telephone.

Students will have access to the facilities agreed with the School for the duration of their candidature. Facilities may be limited during periods of extensions to candidature due to resource constraints and to make space available for incoming students. Schools will make clear to students the provision of space and facilities that students can expect. Schools will indicate this provision before students enrol in their degree programmes.

2.5.2 Representation on Committees Dealing with Postgraduate Provision

Schools will ensure that postgraduate research students are represented formally on relevant School committees and provided with the opportunity to communicate with committees through student forums. Students will be informed of the means by which they can make their views known to the School committees and School managers.

2.6   On Being a Research Student

2.6.1 The University and the Student

All students are members of the University community. The University invites research students to share in the strategic objectives of the University as an institution. The University aims to provide:
- A nurturing and stimulating intellectual and social environment
- The opportunity to develop critical and analytical skills
- Training in research methods and relevant technical skills
- Adequate facilities for research
- A professional level of supervision
- Personal, professional and career development advice and opportunities
- Pastoral support

- Efficient administration
- Fair treatment
- Clear regulations and assessment procedures
- Good, regularly updated documentation
- Timely information
- Understandable and effective complaints and appeal procedures
- Common institution-wide standards
- A nationally and internationally accepted qualification.

The University invites and encourages students to participate in the life of the University during their candidature and throughout their later careers as alumni, upholding and enhancing the reputation of the University. The University actively seeks the views of students, will respond to feedback and participates in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES).

2.6.2 Involvement in the Life of the University

Supervisors will encourage students to play a part in the intellectual life of the School, the University and the wider community. There are many University societies that support involvement in the University community. Research students are automatically members of the Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) which produces a Postgraduate Survival Guide available from the Advice Place. See
- EUSA

2.6.3 Responsibilities of the Student

During candidature students are responsible for their own development as researchers and for developing their projects. Students will:
- Acquaint themselves with the standards expected of the relevant degree in their subject (PhD, MPhil, Masters by Research or taught professional doctorate)
- Undertake any training as recommended by their Principal Supervisor
- Take advantage of the facilities and supervision offered in the University
- Fulfil the requirements of their research degree programme
- Work diligently and effectively throughout the period of their candidature
- Work as a professional, independent researcher accountable for the development of their own research
- Acknowledge the work of other scholars and researchers on whom they draw (See also section 6 on plagiarism and cheating.)
- Produce a thesis that makes a significant contribution to knowledge
- Submit the completed thesis on time
- Ensure that the thesis is their own work and acknowledges sources correctly (See section 6 on plagiarism and cheating.)
- Actively seek advice and help from the sources identified in this Code if problems arise.

2.6.4 Responsibility for the Quality of the Thesis

Responsibility for the quality of the thesis and the outcome of the assessment resides with the student rather than the supervisory team or the University. See possible examination outcomes listed in the Assessment Regulations. After assessment, the examiners make recommendations to the College Postgraduate Committee or Board, who then decide on the basis of the examiners' reports whether the thesis passes, or if further work is required.
- Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees

2.6.5 Team Working

The University recognises the substantial benefits of team working, including with other students and staff, and encourages joint publication. In the thesis submitted for assessment the examiners will need to be able to identify and assess the individual work of the candidate. It is the student's responsibility to indicate clearly which parts of the thesis describe work done by others. See section 3.5.9 on the inclusion of joint publications in the thesis.

2.6.6 Proofreading

Supervisors may advise students to seek assistance from others who can aid with proofreading. Proofreaders should only comment on the vocabulary, grammar and general clarity of written English, but not advise on subject matter or argumentation. It is good practice to acknowledge any assistance provided in producing drafts and in the final thesis. EUSA provides a peer proofreading service. Information is available from:
- Advice Place – peer proofreading

2.6.7 Previously Assessed Material

If the period of candidature includes individual work components submitted for assessment then the components must contribute to a coherent whole. Students may not reproduce material for assessment that has already been submitted for credit at this or another institution. In the case of doctoral and MPhil programmes for which there are coursework requirements, material from courses may be included in the final thesis, as these degrees are assessed on the quality of the final thesis only. Coursework submitted for an MSc by Research that includes a taught element contributing to credit for the degree may not be reproduced for assessment in another course.

2.6.8 Producing Publications

Students and supervisors need to discuss strategies for producing publications, and whether they are to be authored singly or as joint publications. The student and the supervisors may collaborate to advance and disseminate the research, leading to joint contributions to seminars, workshops and symposia, and joint publications in academic journals. The Code of Practice for Research is available from Edinburgh Research and Innovation (ERI) and provides guidance on research practices within the University. The student and supervisor will discuss:
- Including text from publications in the thesis
- Including publications as an appendix to the thesis
- Providing an explanation in the thesis of the inclusion of co-authored text
- Any strategy for complying with Open Access requirements.

The University encourages its researchers to produce outputs that are widely read, cited and used. For guidance see:
- Open Access
- Code of Practice for Research

2.6.9 Intellectual Property

The intellectual property (IP) represented by the dissertation or thesis remains the property of the student, as does the copyright of that material. Exceptions apply where prior agreements have been undertaken, for example, as part of the conditions of employment on an externally-funded project, or in other sponsored research. Edinburgh Research and Innovation (ERI) is the University's wholly-owned

company established for commercial development that assists with Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) issues. It provides general advice to students on interaction with industry partners. To avoid disputes, any issues relating to ownership of IP will be discussed with the supervisors, the student and ERI as soon as any potential issues become apparent. See the Code of Practice for Research.

2.7   Support Services

The University, Colleges and Schools provide a comprehensive range of support services to enable students to make the most of their time as members of the University community.

2.7.1 The Advice Place

The Advice Place is home to EUSA's professional advice team offering students free, impartial and confidential information on everything and anything that their members need to know.

2.7.2 Student Counselling Service

The Student Counselling Service offers one-to-one counselling, workshops and consultation and training for staff. The service aims to help students work through their difficulty, understand themselves better and find ways of managing their situation.

2.7.3 English Language Tuition

The supervisor will emphasise to the students the need for any essential, strongly recommended remedial English language training and encourage the student to attend. The student is responsible for attending classes as recommended by the English Language Teaching Centre (ELTC). See section 2.4.1above for more information.

2.7.4 Study Skills

The University, Schools and Support Services provide information, support and training for the development of research and transferable skills. These skills are vital for development as an independent researcher and important for progression beyond the degree. Skills can be developed as an integral part of supervision and may be provided through credit-bearing research methods courses. Additional support is provided through a variety of training courses, online resources and engagement with the research community, including tutoring and demonstrating activity.

Colleges, Schools, the Institute for Academic Development (IAD), the Careers Service, the Students' Association, Information Services, Doctoral Training Centres and partnerships and other groups provide training in transferable skills and professional development. Resources for developing skills are also available online and in University libraries.

Supervisors will work with their students to encourage attendance on the appropriate training courses. The University encourages postgraduate students to take the initiative in their development and record their own portfolio of skills, including:
- Attendance on regular training and development opportunities in accordance with their personal development needs and the demands of their research
- Use of e-learning opportunities
- Use of the library and available online resources
- Engagement with the research community including presenting at seminars, tutoring and demonstrating, producing publications and attending conferences.

2.7.5 Library Collections and Services

University collections include books, rare books, artworks, images, museum items and archives. Students can make appropriate use of the wide range of library services, collections and study spaces provided to support both taught and research elements of their work. Both online and print library resources are available for students based in Edinburgh or undertaking online or distance learning. There is an Academic Support Librarian allocated to each School. Their role is to provide assistance on using library sites, services and collections, demonstrate the use of information resources by arranging subject-specific information skills sessions, give help with students' research by arranging one-to-one advice sessions, and advise on research data management.

- Academic Support Librarians
- Library services

2.7.6 Computing Resources

The University assumes that students will be competent in word processing, use of the web and communication by email. All students are registered for email usage and the University treats email correspondence via the student's University account as the official and sufficient means of communication. See:

- Guidance on the use of email for contacting students

Schools will ensure that students have access to specialised computing facilities where required, and that students receive appropriate training. Training will cover the means of access to computing facilities and essential components of their use, as relevant to particular degree programmes and research projects. Information Services provides a wide range of advice on all aspects of computing and IT.

- IS Computing Services

2.7.7 Students with Disabilities

The Student Disability Service provides information and advice to University staff, including Programme Directors, supervisors and support staff as well as to disabled students. Amongst their range of services, staff in the Student Disability Service will:

- Recommend support for Schools to implement measures for students based on an assessment of the student's needs
- Advise supervisors and support staff on how to support disabled students to develop their study skills
- Advise on specific adjustments to study, examination and assessment procedures
- Provide student support assistants who can proofread texts, assist in the library and act as notetakers
- Support students to apply for funding, if they are entitled to Disabled Students Allowance (DSA) or equivalent funding for international and EU students.

Students with impairments (this includes dyslexia, mental health problems, Asperger Syndrome, as well as physical and sensory impairments) that will affect study should contact the Student Disability Service as soon as possible in their candidature. See:

- Student Disability Service

3   Research progress

3.1   Contact between Students and Supervisors

Postgraduate research students rely on contact with their supervisors for guidance and intellectual input to their research. Supervisors will maintain regular contact with their students. Students have a responsibility to make themselves available at times agreed with their supervisors. Supervisors may be available for consultation during office hours and outside of scheduled meeting times.

The first nine months of candidature are crucial in setting the agenda of the research. The University regulations specify that the student and supervisor will meet at least twice a semester. The student can initiate meetings, but the supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the requirement for the minimum number of meetings is met.

3.1.1   Keeping Records of Key Meetings

The University requires students and supervisors to back up guidance and decisions with written (or emailed) communication. The student and supervisor will keep a record of their key meetings, when they occurred and what was agreed or decided. The student will produce a record of the meeting and forward it to their supervisor for agreement. This record is an essential part of the University's quality assurance and enhancement process. The record will include:

- Date of the meeting
- Purpose of the meeting
- Any specific problems identified
- Action points.

See also:

- Quality Assurance, Monitoring and Reporting of Postgraduate Research Provision

3.1.2   Research Integrity and Ethics Approval

The University is signatory to the Concordat to Support Research Integrity, in which the University agrees to:

- Maintain the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research
- Ensure that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards
- Support a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice and support for the development of researchers
- Use transparent, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise
- Works with partners to strengthen the integrity of research and to review progress regularly and openly.

See also:

- The Concordat to Support Research Integrity
- Code of Practice for Research: Promoting Good Practice and Preventing Misconduct

Students and supervisors are responsible for maintaining ethical standards in the design, conduct and reporting of research, and will need to follow any procedures for ethical approval laid out by their School research committees.

3.1.3 Duty of Care

The University has legal responsibilities to its students and staff for health and safety, equality and diversity, data protection and dignity and respect. Supervisors and students are covered by these policies:
- Health and Safety
- Data Protection
- Equality & Diversity
- Dignity & Respect

3.2   Monitoring Student Progress

Supervisors are responsible for monitoring student progress and reporting annually to the Graduate Office and College postgraduate committee or board.

3.2.1 Annual Progression Review

The University requires Schools and supervisors to review student progress within nine to 12 months for each year of full time or part-time study for doctoral and MPhil degrees. By this time the student will have produced an identifiable body of work that has been produced independently and that can be assessed. This will normally form the basis for confirmation of degree registration, or to progress.

a)   The first review will take place within nine to 12 months of the student's enrolment.

b)   Progress in subsequent years is assessed at nine to 12 month intervals until thesis submission.

c)   The student will attend a review meeting and is required to provide a presentation or report. The student may also be required to prepare an oral presentation.

d)   The student's submission will include a forward plan of their work.

e)   An assessment panel of three to five members will review the student's presentation or report. The assessment panel will include the supervisory team and at least one other person.

f)   After each review, written feedback will be provided by the assessment panel to the student. The student will acknowledge receipt of the feedback. The supervisors will also prepare a written report on the student's progress, signed by all supervisors for submission to the College Office.

g)   Similar procedures apply to part-time students, and reviews of part-time students will also take place within nine to 12 months of their enrolment. The reviewers will make allowance in their assessment for the part-time status of the student's candidature.

h)   If the progression review indicates concerns about a student's progress, then a further review will take place within three months. (Only one repeat review may be undertaken before confirmation of registration.)

i)   If the assessment panel identifies a serious problem, or advises discontinuation, then the student will be interviewed. Students will not be discontinued until they are given an opportunity to respond to the assessment. See section 3.3.8 on discontinuation of study.

The progression review provides the formal report by the supervisor on the student's progress, although some Schools have additional requirements. The first progression review will:
- Form the basis for the decision to confirm degree registration
- Provide a record of achievements to date and confirm that any original conditions of registration have been met
- Indicate that the area of study has been defined.

Schools will explain to postgraduate research students the School's review requirements. At the end of any year such review documents may include any of several components, such as:

- A timetable for progress agreed by the student and supervisory team
- A record of whether deadlines have been met
- The results of coursework examined by written tests or continuous assessment
- Assessments of presentations and reports of directed reading or specific project work
- The results of interviews about progress.

Students will also report on:

- Any programme of skills training required by their research
- Transferable skills development.

Supervisors will be frank about any difficulties that have arisen and will give their views on the prospect of successful completion. The supervisor will provide the student with a written report outlining these. Supervisors can recommend that a student registered for an MPhil re-register for a PhD if merited by the project and the student's performance, or that a student registered for a PhD might re-register for an MPhil, or discontinue study (see recommendations in section 3.3.8).

Practices will vary according to School and discipline, but by the end of the second year a student in the social sciences, arts and the humanities will be expected to produce a substantial piece of writing beyond that submitted in the first year. In the case of practice-based research the student will have by the second year assembled a substantial part of their portfolio and any relevant documentation.

3.2.2 Recommendations Following the Progression Review

In consultation with their Postgraduate Director, supervisors will recommend to the College Postgraduate Committee or Board the future of the student's candidature. The supervisors will provide written feedback to the student, but the student is not involved in making that decision. As part of the review, the supervisors and Postgraduate Director will decide on one of several options:

a) Confirmation of registration for the degree for which the student is enrolled (for example PhD, MPhil)
b) A repeat progression review to be held within three months
c) For part-time students only, deferment of the confirmation decision to the following annual review
d) Registration for a different degree such as MPhil or Masters by Research
e) Registration for a postgraduate taught degree (MSc) or diploma, which may include credit for courses already taken
f) Discontinuation of registration (see section 3.3.8).

If a student is not performing at the required level then the supervisors and the Postgraduate Director will decide on option (c), (d), (e) or (f). Supervisors will provide students with an explanation in writing of their assessment.

If the annual progress review indicates serious problems or requests for extensions to the period of study then the College Postgraduate Committee or Board will examine annual reports for:

- Indications of how the difficulties arose
- What steps were taken by supervisor and student to deal with them at an early stage.

Note that on behalf of the Committee or Board, the chair (or Postgraduate Dean) may undertake this assessment with advice from the Postgraduate Office.

If the student's research changes direction and diverges from the supervisors' expertise then the supervisors will review their own competence to deal with the new research area. In this case:

- The School can recommend a change in supervisors to the College Postgraduate Research Committee or Board.

(See also Section 3.3.8 Discontinuation and Academic Performance)

3.3 Absences, Interruptions and Extensions

Absences, interruptions and extensions to study are concessions to the regulations for which students must have appropriate approval. Schools and supervisors reviewing requests for interruptions and other concessions will consider any adjustments put in place for individual students.

3.3.1 Student Leave of Absence

Students will carry out their research in or near the University, unless they are on distance learning or e-learning programmes or undertaking joint PhDs. Students may also need to conduct some of their research for long periods in locations outside of Edinburgh, including overseas. Students can apply for permission to move away from their usual term-time residence to continue their studies for temporary periods at a more distant location. Colleges and Schools will authorise such periods of absence if such a temporary move:

- Benefits the research programme
- Is not detrimental to the research and the student's development and participation in the university's academic community
- Does not conflict with any other requirement of the student's programme of study
- Does not conflict with any obligations to be available for on-campus activity
- Has a working timetable agreed by supervisors and student
- Has an agreed method and frequency for submitting written work and receiving feedback, established by the supervisors and student.

Colleges will provide further information on how absences are approved and recorded, as well as how the student will be supported during the absence.

3.3.2 Leave of Absence for International Students

Students who hold a Tier 4 visa are normally required to carry out all studies on University premises. Where a Leave of Absence is required (in accordance with section 3.3.1), the University will report to the Home Office informing them of the new location of studies, and the duration of the absence. In some cases, it may be appropriate for the University to withdraw sponsorship of the student's Tier 4 visa for the duration of the absence, and the student will need to make a new visa application if they return to the UK for studies. It is, therefore, important that Tier 4 students seek full advice from the International Office before proceeding with a Leave of Absence. See section 2.4.

3.3.3 Vacation Leave

Students may be absent from their studies for up to six weeks of the year without applying for an interruption of study, and should notify their supervisors and the School Postgraduate Office of any such planned absences.

3.3.4 Authorised Interruption of Study

Students unable to study for a period of time can apply for an interruption to their period of study. Application for interruption of study:

- Will be made formally to the School or College postgraduate office using the appropriate request form
- Will be made in advance of the period of interruption, not in retrospect
- Needs to comply with visa restrictions if applicable
- Should be accompanied by verification of need if applicable, such as a medical certificate.

Any single period of authorised interruption of study cannot exceed one year, unless authorised by the Head of College and the total period of authorised interruption of study will not exceed 100% of the prescribed period of full time study. If the need for the interruption is sudden and unforeseen then the application must be made as soon as practical. In any case, the student will notify the supervisor as soon as the need for the interruption arises, or encounters a problem that will affect the progress of their study. An approved interruption of study postpones the date at which the student's total permitted period of study will end. Students applying for interruptions need to investigate how any alteration to their period of study will affect external conditions such as their funding, visa, or council tax arrangements. The Advice Place can give advice on funding and council tax implications of interruptions. Advice on the implication of interruption for student with Tier 4 visa is available from the International Office.

- The Advice Place
- International Office

3.3.5 Extension to the Period of Study

Students who are unable to submit their thesis within their prescribed period of study, plus any permitted submission period (see section 1.2.3) need to apply formally for an extension. The formal application will include:

- A statement outlining the academic reasons for the delay
- A plan of work towards submitting the thesis, with milestones and specific dates agreed with the supervisors.

Supervisors will monitor closely the student's plan for completion. Extensions to the period of study are exceptional and not automatic.

- Students can only request up to 12 months at a time.
- The maximum total period of extensions is 24 months.
- Students must submit their thesis within 12 months of the end of the prescribed period of study.
- If required, students must apply for extensions of study before the end of their maximum submission date (for example, within four years for a full-time PhD).
- An interruption of study cannot be granted after the maximum period of study has elapsed.

Further information on periods of study is available in the Degree Regulations:

- DRPS Study Period Table

Students applying for extensions need to investigate how any alteration to their period of study will affect external conditions such as their funding, visa, or council tax arrangements. See

- Authorised interruption of study or extension of study – Postgraduate Research

3.3.6 Continuation Fees

Students continuing study beyond the period for which annual fees are payable are required to pay one matriculation fee during the submission period and then a continuation fee for every authorised extension until they submit their thesis. Continuation fees are charged pro rata for the full period of an approved extension. During the prescribed period of study, the matriculation fee is included in the tuition fee.

- University continuation fee information

3.3.7 Withdrawal from Study

Candidates unable to submit the thesis by the end of the maximum period of study, or the extended maximum period of study (including concessions), will be notified by the College Postgraduate Committee of impending withdrawal of candidature (section 3.3.8).

3.3.8 Discontinuation and Academic Performance

The supervisors may recommend that a student already registered for the PhD, MPhil, Masters by Research or a professional doctorate discontinue their studies. In this case the following procedure will be followed.

1. The supervisor recommending discontinuation will inform in writing the Head of School, or their nominee (normally the Postgraduate Director).
2. The Head of School or nominee will notify the student that discontinuation has been recommended.
3. If the Head of School or nominee disagrees with the supervisor's recommendation for discontinuation, they will ensure that an appropriate framework is in place to allow the candidate to continue with their studies, including the provision of any conditions, targets or deadlines that the candidate must fulfil.
4. The College committee with responsibility for postgraduate research matters examines the recommendations of the Head of School or nominee before deciding whether to accept the recommendation.
5. The student will be given an opportunity to submit their views to the College committee before the decision is taken.
6. If the decision to discontinue is approved by the College, the student has the right to submit a case for appeal if they feel they have grounds. See section 5.

3.4   Preparing the Thesis for Submission

The student should agree with their supervisor a schedule of dates for completing the elements of the final thesis ready for submission. The student will check the University guidance about the format of the thesis, binding requirements and electronic formats. See the Academic Services thesis submission web page.

- Academic Services: thesis submission

3.4.1 Notice of Intention to Submit

Students on PhD and MPhil degrees should submit the thesis during the submission period. Students wishing to submit a thesis earlier than the end of the prescribed period of study need to discuss this option with their supervisor and request permission from the College Postgraduate Committee before doing so. The submission procedure begins when the student submits a Notice of Intention to Submit form to the Postgraduate Office no later than two months in advance of submission. The Notice of Intention to Submit form will be accompanied by an abstract of the thesis suitable for distribution to examiners or potential examiners.

3.5 Thesis Assessment

3.5.1 Appointment of Examiners

The choice of examiners will take into account:
- Their expertise in the discipline of the thesis
- Their ability to provide an impartial assessment of the submitted work
- Their availability to examine the thesis.

Members of affiliated or associated institutions may serve as internal but not external examiners.

External examiners cannot serve if within the past four years they have:
- Held an appointment on the teaching or research staff at the University of Edinburgh
- Been a student of the University
- Held honorary status in the University.

In exceptional circumstances the Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee may waive these restrictions.

The supervisor will approach potential examiners, and discuss with them their availability to examine the thesis. The student will notify their supervisor or the School Postgraduate Director if they have any concerns about a particular examiner appointment. The supervisor may consult with the student about potential examiners, but the decision is the University's responsibility. Following the Intention to Submit the supervisor will identify and recommend for approval by the College Postgraduate Committee:
- One external examiner
- One internal examiner.

In the case of an interdisciplinary topic and on the advice of the supervisors, and in the case of PhD students who are also members of staff the College Postgraduate Committee may appoint a second external examiner. (See also section 3.5.2)

3.5.2 Assessment of Students who are also Members of Staff

When the student is or has been a member of staff of the University during their research degree the College will appoint:
- two external examiners
- one internal examiner.

For students in this category neither the Head of School nor the Postgraduate Director can be an examiner except with the permission of the Senatus Curriculum and Student Progression Committee. There is no requirement for students who are or have been tutors or demonstrators (or have undertaken similar roles) to have two external examiners.

3.5.3 Appointment of a Chair for the Oral Examination

The School will nominate a person to chair the oral examination. The Internal Examiner will chair the oral examination unless there is a non-examining chair. The appointment of a non-examining chair is compulsory if the internal examiner is an honorary member of staff or is examining a research degree at that level for the first time. It is the responsibility of the chair to ensure consistency between examiners and fairness to both the examiners and the candidate. The College committee with responsibility for postgraduate research matters will approve and appoint the non-examining chair.

3.5.4 Date of the Oral Examination

The date of the oral examination depends on:
- The date the Notice of Intention to Submit is presented to the School or Postgraduate Office
- The date the thesis is submitted by the student
- The time it takes to select and appoint examiners
- The period the examiners require to examine the thesis
- The availability of all parties to meet for the oral examination, including any visa restrictions on the student's availability.

3.5.5 The Submitted Thesis

The student is responsible for producing the thesis in the time allotted and of the required quality. The thesis will:
- Be the student's own work, except where clearly stated on the Declarations Page of the thesis
- Make an original and significant contribution to knowledge in the field of study
- Contain material suitable for wider dissemination
- Show adequate knowledge of the field of study and of the relevant literature
- Demonstrate critical judgement of the candidate's own work and that of other scholars in the field
- Present a coherent body of work.

Written aspects of the thesis will:
- Be satisfactory in literary presentation
- Include full and adequate references
- Present a coherent structure
- Make clear the intentions of the work, its background, methods and conclusions
- Be understandable to a scholar in the same field.

3.5.6 Responsibility for the Outcome of the Assessment

The thesis is the student's own work and the student is responsible for its eventual quality as assessed by the examiners. Approval by the supervisors is not a guarantee of a favourable assessment outcome. If the supervisors have any concerns about the quality of the thesis then they need to communicate this in writing to the student as soon as possible prior to the proposed submission date. Such advice may also include recommending to the College Postgraduate Committee that the student be re-registered for a different degree and the thesis is submitted for a different degree, for example an MPhil is submitted for examination as a PhD, or a PhD or MSc is submitted for examination as an MPhil.

3.5.7 Assessment Criteria

The criteria for assessment of research theses, the procedure governing the examination and the recommendations open to examiners are described in the regulations and in the examiners' report forms.
- Degree Programme Regulations

The examiners are asked to assess the thesis in terms of the grounds for the award of degree set out in the regulations. The purpose of the assessment is to allow the examiners to establish that the thesis is satisfactory. As part of their written report, examiners will be asked:
- Is the thesis an original work that makes a significant contribution to knowledge in or understanding of the field of knowledge?

- Does the thesis contain material worthy of publication?
- Does the thesis demonstrate adequate knowledge of the field of study and relevant literature?
- Does the thesis show the exercise of critical judgement with regard to both the student's work and that of other scholars in the same general field?
- Is the presentation and style of the thesis satisfactory?

Examiners will also be asked if they think the student needs to make any corrections, amendments or major revisions to the thesis.

3.5.8 Length of the Thesis

The Postgraduate Degree Regulations specify the maximum length of the written thesis. The maximum length applies to the length of the body of the thesis. This body includes the main text, preface material, footnotes and references, but does not include material in any appendices, bibliography, abstract or lay summary (see section 3.7.3). Note that any appendices are examined at the discretion of the examiners. If a longer thesis is required for adequate treatment of the thesis topic, the supervisor will seek the approval of the College committee with responsibility for postgraduate research matters prior to submission.

- Postgraduate Degree Regulations

3.5.9 The Thesis and Joint Publications

Candidates are encouraged to publish their research during their candidature, and provision is made for articles and papers to be bound in the thesis. Where the thesis includes the results of team working the thesis will be more than a compendium of jointly authored articles, and will include information that makes it possible for the examiners to track the individual work of the candidate. Where the thesis includes collaborative publications it needs to be made clear in the thesis and stated on the signed declaration form (section 3.7.3):

- The candidate's role in any joint work.
- The nature of team involvement in any experimental procedures
- How the team involvement facilitated the findings of the research.

3.5.10 Portfolio Material

The Postgraduate Degree Regulations and School postgraduate guidelines specify any further requirements for designs, composition, artworks, or performances and their display, presentation and documentation.

3.5.11 Supplementary Material

A candidate may wish to provide additional data or presentation material in electronic form. This electronic material may help the examiners to understand and assess the thesis. Electronic material may be on portable media submitted in a pocket at the back of the printed thesis, or as a file upload in the case of electronic submission. Such material will supplement the thesis and the examiners may choose to take it into account in their assessment.

3.5.12   Lay Summary

After examination the candidate will need to provide a lay summary to be included in the final thesis. It is not included in the thesis word count, and will be incorporated at the beginning of each copy of the thesis. The lay summary is intended to facilitate knowledge exchange, public awareness and outreach. It should be written in simple, non-technical terms that are easily understandable by a lay audience, who may be non-professional, non-scientific and outside the research area. The lay summary is submitted as part of the suite of submission forms, although it is not assessed by the examiners, but can be discussed with the Supervisor at any stage prior to the final thesis being lodged with the Edinburgh Research Archive. The lay summary is to be produced in a standard format

- Lay summary form
- Lay summary guidelines

3.6   The Assessment Process

If the examiners agree that the thesis is of the appropriate standard then they will indicate that an oral examination will be held (for doctoral and MPhil degrees). The examiners will deliver their assessment to the College Postgraduate Board after the oral examination.

3.6.1 Supervisor Presence at the Oral Examination

Supervisors may attend the oral examination as observers, if the student and examiners consent to this. On such occasions supervisors:

- may take notes
- will not comment during the examination
- will leave the examination room with the student
- will not participate in the discussion and decision of the examiners
- will absent themselves at any stage if the student requests this.

3.6.2 Organisation of the Oral Examination

An oral examination will be held to assess a student's PhD or MPhil thesis. Arrangements for the oral examination are the responsibility of the internal examiner, who also chairs the meeting of the examiners unless a non-examining chair is appointed. Where a non-examining chair is appointed they will chair the meeting. These arrangements, including the date and place of the oral examination and the names of all participants, will be provided in advance to all those who are to be present at the oral examination. Students staying overseas must be prepared to return to the UK for the examination, unless other arrangements are made as outlined in section 3.6.3.

3.6.3 Examination Outside of the UK

If it is convenient for all parties in the examination process including the candidate then the University permits examinations to be conducted remotely:

- At a meeting venue outside of the UK
- At a meeting where one or more of the examiners or the student are in synchronous communication via an electronic video link.

Such remote assessment requires agreement from the College Postgraduate Committee or Board, the student, all examiners and any non-examining chair. Guidance is available from College Offices and on Academic Services' website:

- Guidance on video linked viva examinations

3.6.4 Examiner Preparation

The College is responsible for ensuring that the internal examiner and non-examining chair are suitably prepared for the examination, that is:

- training is available to inexperienced internal examiners and chairs
- they are aware of their duties in the examination process
- they are familiar with the university's regulations
- they are familiar with the range of recommendations available to the examiners after the oral examination.

3.6.5 Examiner Recommendations

The examiners may recommend that the thesis pass without amendment or further work. In this case the candidate may not make further alteration to the thesis. The examiners may specify minor corrections, to be completed without further supervision or further research, or more substantial further work requiring supervision. The examiners will also be required to specify the time frame in which further work is to be completed. Full details of examiner recommendations are available in the assessment regulations:

- Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees

3.6.6 Notification of Examiner Recommendations

The examiners may tell the candidate what their views are at the end of or after the oral examination, and they will make clear that their view is a recommendation to the College committee with responsibility for postgraduate research matters and not a final decision. After inspecting the examiners' reports the committee reserves the right to modify or change the examiners' recommendation.

3.7   After the Examination

3.7.1 Revisions to the Thesis

The supervisor's role may continue after the examination. If minor corrections are required or the student needs to correct deficiencies in the thesis then these will be communicated to the candidate and to the supervisor. The supervisor will confirm the necessary revisions with the candidate. The examiners' joint report will be made available to the candidate and their supervisor for further guidance on the general quality of the thesis and level of the candidate's knowledge. The revised thesis is then approved by the Internal Examiner and also by the External Examiner if requested.

3.7.2 Thesis Resubmission

The examiners may recommend resubmission for the same degree after a further period of study under supervision. The thesis will normally be re-examined by the original examiners, and a second oral examination may be held. Alternatively, the examiners may recommend:

- Re-presentation of a PhD thesis for MPhil
- Re-presentation or resubmission of an MPhil for a Masters by Research
- That the thesis or the student's defence of it in the oral examination are deficient in terms of the standards required of any of the research degrees available and that the thesis fails.

In the event of a resubmission the examiners will specify any corrections or revisions and the period for resubmission. A candidate is permitted only one opportunity to resubmit a thesis. The supervisor should offer guidance to the candidate on the steps necessary to meet the requirements expressed by the examiners and will provide further supervision as appropriate. If resubmission is required:

- The candidate will be given a clear written statement prepared by the examiners and approved by the relevant College committee of the aspects that require revision.
- The resubmitted thesis may be assessed only against this written statement on re-examination, and the examiners will not introduce new criticisms of previously examined material.
- The written statement of the aspects of the thesis that require revision cannot subsequently be altered without the agreement of that committee.

If the College committee with responsibility for postgraduate research fails the thesis then the candidate will be provided with a written statement explaining the decision. In these circumstances the supervisor will discuss the outcome with the student. The College Postgraduate Dean is also available to talk with the student if requested.

3.7.3 Final Submission of the Assessed Thesis

At the end of the assessment process all successful doctoral and MPhil candidates are required to submit the final version of their thesis to the University in electronic form in addition to one hardbound copy. Hardbound copies should conform to the Regulatory Standards for the Format and Binding of a Thesis:

- How to submit the final version of your PhD thesis

Candidates should therefore hand in the following to their College Postgraduate Office:
i. One hardbound version of the thesis conforming to the Regulatory Standards, including
   a. a signed declaration form
   b. one completed 'Access to Thesis' form (see below), which can be downloaded from the Academic Services website
   c. any supplementary data required for assessment. Datasets should be supported by good accompanying documentation which is appropriate to the subject discipline. The UK Data Archive (UKDA) offers some specialist advice in this area.
   d. a lay summary of the thesis (see section 3.5.12)
   e. one copy of the abstract on one page only
ii. An electronic version including
   a. a PDF version (for uploading to the Edinburgh Research Archive)
   b. the original document source files (where possible) for digital preservation purposes
   c. a completed thesis note indicating whether or not the candidate wishes to take up the option of restricting access to the electronic version of the thesis for a limited one year period. The form can be downloaded from the University's Information Services website.

3.7.4 Online Access to the Thesis

Candidates should discuss with their Supervisor the implications of publishing the thesis online in the Edinburgh Research Archive (ERA). The student can restrict access to the thesis or parts of the thesis if
- the thesis contains confidential or sensitive data
- the candidate intends to publish the whole thesis or extracts from it.

The candidate can restrict access to the electronic version of the thesis as indicated above in section 3.7.3. If the candidate wishes the electronic embargo to be longer than one year then this must be negotiated with the ERA administrators. ERA will release an embargoed thesis for download at the end of the restriction period.

3.7.5 Graduation

Degree awards are conferred at graduation. Graduation ceremonies are held in June-July and November. Candidates may be awarded their degrees in absentia in April.

Figure 1. Diagram showing the progress of a typical full time PhD candidature with milestones, and prior to the inclusion of any periods of interrupted study or extensions. Note that prescribed period of study is reduced to 2 years for a full time MPhil and 1 year for an MSc. MSc students do not undergo a progression review. Nor do they provide an intention to submit form. Part-time MPhil and PhD candidates are required to undergo a progression review in their first year even though their prescribed period of study is longer than for full time candidates. See section 3.2.1.

4 Resolving problems

4.1 Personal Concerns

Students are encouraged to bring any concerns, including those of a social or medical nature, to the attention of supervisors especially if the problem is interfering with the students' work. Students need to make their concerns explicit as supervisors may not notice until problems show up as lack of progress. Supervisors will also respect any student's request for such concerns to be treated confidentially. Schools may provide postgraduate advisers as well as supervisors who can discuss any concerns. School support staff also provide contact points for advice on available support services. Full details of University student support services are available in section 8.4.

4.2 Working Relationships

Most interpersonal problems will be avoided if the student, supervisors, and other members of the University community contribute responsibly and professionally to their working relationship by being respectful, courteous, punctual and conscientious. See also section 4.6.
- The University Dignity and Respect Policy

4.3 Decisions of the University Committees

If a student wishes to contest a decision of the College committee with responsibility for postgraduate research matters then as well as discussing the matter with their supervisors they may consult with the committee Convener (usually the College Postgraduate Dean) or Secretary. The Advice Place can also be approached at any stage to offer independent guidance and advice.

4.4　Recording Problems with Progress

Supervisors are required to provide constructive criticism about the student's work. Honest discussion can reduce conflict or prevent it arising. Supervisors and students are required to keep a record of their key meetings (see section 3.1.1). A supervisor who thinks that progress has been consistently unsatisfactory should notify the student in writing after discussing the problem with him or her. Unsatisfactory progress will also be noted in annual reports, and flagged for remedial action.

4.5　The Supervisor-Student Relationship

If for any reason students feel unable to confide in their supervisors they should approach the Postgraduate Adviser in their subject area, or the School's Postgraduate Director. As long as they have explored these avenues the student may consult with the Secretary or Chair of the College committee with responsibility for postgraduate research matters. University staff will treat such information as confidential and will limit disclosures to as few colleagues as necessary to resolve the problem. Such avenues are also appropriate when the supervisor-student relationship seems to have broken down or needs to be amended (for example if the supervisor changes institution). In the event of problems, supervisors may also approach the Secretary or Chair of the College committee with responsibility for postgraduate research matters.

4.6　Dignity and Respect

The University seeks to provide equal opportunities for its students and staff. Respect, trust, confidence and fairness are essential elements in the relationship between supervisor and student. The Dignity and Respect policy promotes a positive culture for working and studying to which every student and member of staff contributes and within which they are able to fulfil their potential:

- Dignity and Respect Policy

All University staff and students will observe the obligations outlined in this policy.

Personal harassment is one of the concepts covered by the policy. Personal harassment encompasses sexual harassment and any behaviour unwelcome by the recipient on grounds such as gender, sexual orientation, race, and religion. Harassment can occur in either direction between staff and students, and irrespective of gender.

The consequences of harassment are acute where the person responsible for the harassment occupies a position of authority, as in the role of supervisor, Postgraduate Director, teacher, examiner or administrator, and who is therefore able to affect the mark, grade, qualification, employment or career of the person harassed. The Dignity and Respect Policy contains advice both on seeking informal assistance in such cases, and on the procedures for making a formal complaint.

4.7　Complaints

The University aims to ensure that its teaching and support services provide positive experiences and opportunities for students. The University has a procedure for considering complaints and recognises that it can learn from complaints, enabling it to improve the quality of the student experience, and the quality and effectiveness of its services. Students are encouraged to try and resolve problems as early as possible and with assistance from appropriate staff. See

- Complaint Procedure
- EUSA support and advice on complaints

5   Academic Appeals

An academic appeal is a request for a decision made by a Board of Examiners to be reconsidered in relation to marks, progression, degree classification or degree award.

- Academic Appeals

5.1   Grounds for Appeal

Under the University Academic Appeal Regulations there are three formal grounds under which a research postgraduate student may submit an appeal. These are

- Ground A: Substantial information directly relevant to the quality of performance in the eamination which for good reason was not available to the examiners when their decision was taken.
- Ground B: Alleged irregular procedure or improper conduct of an examination. For this purpose conduct of an examination includes the conduct of a meeting of the Board of Examiners.
- Ground C: Evidence of prejudice or lack of due diligence in the examination on the part of any of the examiners.

5.2   Information about Special Circumstances

In the case of Ground A, candidates will bring to the attention of the examiners any factors that may have an adverse impact on their performance in an examination, such as personal illness or the illness of a close relative or partner immediately before or during the examination.

Candidates will notify the School Postgraduate Office or College Postgraduate Office as appropriate in writing (for example by email) of any special circumstances before the meeting of the examiners. In an appeal case students cannot claim as grounds for an appeal that they did not know of the requirement to notify the University of their special circumstances.

- Special Circumstances Policy

5.3   Role of the Supervisor in an Appeal Case

The supervisor's pastoral role continues after an appeal has been lodged, even though the appeal might question the quality of supervision. The supervisor will decide, after taking appropriate advice, whether to assist the student in formulating the case for an appeal. If a full hearing of the appeal is to take place then the Appeal Committee may request the supervisor's written comments in advance of the hearing, and supervisors will usually be invited to give evidence at the hearing.

5.4   Submitting an Appeal

Appeals should be submitted in writing, with an application form that is available on the Academic Services website, to academic.appeals@ed.ac.uk

- Academic appeals

Further information on the University appeal procedure and details of the University Academic Appeal Regulations can be accessed on the Academic Services website. Students considering an appeal should contact an Academic Adviser at the EUSA Advice Place for independent advice.

- Advice Place support on appeals

6   Plagiarism and cheating

As outlined in section 3.5.5 a thesis must be the student's own work, except where clearly stated, and to make an original and significant contribution to knowledge. Also see section 3.1.2 on research ethics and integrity. Plagiarism and cheating are counter to this ethos, and are offences against University discipline. The full text of the University's regulations on academic misconduct, and specific guidance on plagiarism for research students and supervisors can be found at

- Academic Misconduct
- Advice Place support on plagiarism and academic misconduct

7   Edinburgh University Students' Association

Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) is the body that represents students at the University and that provides a number of valuable services and support mechanisms which are confidential and independent of the University. EUSA also organises student events, hosts the student societies, volunteer activities, etc.

Students are invited to contact the Advice Place if they are experiencing difficulties during their studies which they are not sure how to address, or have not been able to resolve to their satisfaction. EUSA's experienced staff will be able to advise students on University procedures, practices and ways of resolving difficulties.

Students who wish to raise specific policy or school issues can do this via their school postgraduate representative. The School Postgraduate Director or EUSA can provide contact details of representatives. EUSA sabbatical officers and Postgraduate Convener also represent students on many University committees. They can be contacted by emailing postgrad@eusa.ed.ac.uk.

8   Appendices

8.1   Appendix I: Health and Safety

The University has a duty to support the health and safety of all employees and students while at work, and of all visitors to University premises. The University Health and Safety Policy contains the University Court's Health and Safety Policy statement and advice on general precautions as well as on precautions pertaining to specific hazards. The successful implementation of the University Policy requires the support and co-operation of all employees and students. The Policy also contains a summary of how staff can meet the requirements of the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974). The UK Health and Safety Executive can bring criminal proceedings against the University or any individual for a breach of any duty under the Act or its Regulations.

8.1.1   The Safety of Postgraduate Students

The University's Health and Safety Policy requires academic staff to pay attention to the health and safety of those under their supervision, in particular:
- Those students who conduct their research in laboratories, clinics, farms, workshops, studios, exhibition and performance venues and in other sites in the University where special training may be required
- Supervised fieldwork and University work carried out elsewhere in the UK or abroad
- Taking account of the level of training and expertise of the staff or students being supervised.

A named person will be available to ensure that health and safety procedures are continued if the Programme Director or dissertation supervisors are absent.

8.1.2   The University Health and Safety Policy

The Policy is published in eight parts, each of which relates to specific aspects of University work. All employees and students will observe those parts of the Health and Safety Policy that are relevant to their own work, and take account of other health and safety guidance. Any questions or problems about matters of health and safety can be taken up initially with the School Health and Safety Adviser. The Director of Health and Safety, the University Radiation Protection Adviser, the Biological Safety Adviser and other professional members of the Health and Safety Department are also available to help. The current edition of the complete University Health and Safety Policy is available on the University website.
- University Health and Safety Policy

8.2   Appendix II: Privacy of Personal Data

The Data Protection Act of 1998 regulates the use of personal data. Personal data includes all recorded information about a living, identifiable individual. Staff and students using personal data for University purposes must comply with the University's data protection policy, procedures and guidance published on the Records Management Section website. The Statement on the Processing of Personal Data by Students deals with cases where:
- The University is responsible for a student's use of personal data
- The student is personally responsible for using such data.

In either case staff and students will comply with the responsibilities below.

8.2.1 Student Responsibilities

Before using personal data as part of their studies, students will:
1. Become familiar with
   a. Data Protection Guidance for Student Research Projects if they are using personal data as part of their programme of study, or
   b. Research and the Data Protection Act if they are carrying out research for an established University research group.
2. Seek data protection guidance about their responsibilities from their supervisor.
3. Discuss the data protection implications for their studies with their supervisor.
4. Gain written approval from their Programme Director or dissertation supervisor for the proposed use of personal data before they begin using personal data.

When using personal data as part of their studies, students will:
1. Only use personal data in accordance with the approval given by their supervisor.
2. Comply with the data protection guidance supplied by the University.
3. Raise any issues about compliance with their Supervisor in a timely manner.

8.2.2 Supervisor Responsibilities

Supervisors of students who are using personal data as part of their studies will:
1. Provide data protection guidance before a student begins using personal data, and discuss with them the data protection implications for their studies.
2. Only approve the use of personal data by students if
   a. the use is necessary and proportionate;
   b. they are satisfied that the proposed use complies with the Data Protection Act; and
   c. the student has received data protection guidance and understands their responsibilities.
3. Monitor regularly their student's use of personal data to ensure compliance with the Data Protection Act.

8.2.3 Consequences of Breaching the Data Protection Act

Failure to comply with the responsibilities above is an offence against University discipline, and could lead to a breach of the Data Protection Act. A data protection breach can cause distress to the people the information is about, and can harm relationships with research partners, stakeholders, and funding organisations. In severe circumstances the University could be sued, fined up to £500,000, and experience reputational damage.
- University Data Protection Policies and Guidance

8.3 Appendix III: University Codes of Practice, Regulations and links to other Useful Information

Alcohol, Abuse of by Students - Code of Practice
www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Other/Alcohol_Abuse.pdf

Assessment Regulations
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/policies-regulations/regulations/assessment

Complaint Procedure
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-academic-services/student-complaint-procedure

Computing Regulations

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/information-services/about/policies-and-regulations/computing-regu-lations

Conduct, Student Code

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/students/postgraduate-research/discipline/code-discipline

Contacting students by email Policy

www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Policies/Contacting_Students_by_Email.pdf

Data Protection - Use of Personal Data by Students

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/data-protection/data-protection-policy

Degree Regulations and Programmes of Study

www.drps.ed.ac.uk/

Dignity & Respect policy

www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/HumanResources/Policies/Dignity_and_Respect-Policy.pdf

Disclosure of Information about Students - Guidelines

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section/data-protection/guidance-policies/student-information

Drugs, Abuse of by Students - Code of Practice

www.docs.sasg.ed.ac.uk/AcademicServices/Other/Drug_Abuse.pdf

Equality and Diversity Policy

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/equality-diversity/legislation-policies/policies

Available from EUSA:

Edinburgh University Students' Association, Postgraduate Guide

A range of guides about welfare and other issues are available from the Advice Place:

- The Advice Place - Guides
  www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/adviceplace/adviceguides/

Glossary of Terms (DRPS)

www.drps.ed.ac.uk/Glossary.php

Library Regulations

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/information-services/about/policies-and-regulations/library-regula-tions

Mental Health, Student - Code of Practice

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-disability-service/staff/supporting-students/mental-health/code-of-practice

New students' website

www.ed.ac.uk/new-students

Plagiarism guidelines

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/students/postgraduate-research/discipline/plagia-rism

Research - Code of Practice
www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/ERI/research-support-and-development/applications/Code-of-Practice-for-Research_October2011.pdf

No Smoking - University Policy
www.docs.csg.ed.ac.uk/HumanResources/Policies/Smoking_Policy_no.pdf

Social Media, University Guidelines
www.ed.ac.uk/polopoly_fs/1.78322!/fileManager/111201%20UoE-Social-Media-Guidelines.pdf

Student Information Pages
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration

8.4   Appendix IV: Sources of Additional Advice and Information

Academic Services
www.ed.ac.uk/academic-services
Old College, South Bridge
Tel: +44(0)131 650 2138
Email: Academic.Services@ed.ac.uk

The Advice Place
www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/advice/
Potterrow, Bristo Square
Tel: +44(0)131 650 9225 or 0800 206 2341
King's Buildings House
Tel: +44(0)131 651 5822

Careers Service
www.ed.ac.uk/careers
3rd Floor, Main Library Building, George Square
Tel: +44(0)131 650 4670
Weir Building, King's Buildings
Tel: +44(0)131 650 5773

Chaplaincy Centre
www.ed.ac.uk/chaplaincy
1 Bristo Square
Tel: +44 (0)131 650 2595
College Offices:

- College of Humanities & Social Science
  www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/humanities-soc-sci
  David Hume Tower, George Square
  Tel: +44(0)131 650 4086

- College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine
  www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/medicine-vet-medicine/home
  Chancellor's Building, 49 Little France Crescent
  Tel: +44(0)131 242 6460 or +44(0)131 242 6461

- College of Science and Engineering
  www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/science-engineering/home
  Weir Building, King's Buildings
  Tel: +44(0)131 650 5737

Edinburgh University Students' Association
www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/
Potterrow, Bristo Square
Tel: +44(0)131 650 2656

English Language Teaching Centre
www.ed.ac.uk/english-language-teaching
Tel: +44(0)131 650 6200

Health and Safety Department
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/health-safety/
9-16 Chambers Street
Tel: +44(0)131 651 4255

Health Service
www.health-service.ed.ac.uk/
Richard Verney Building, 6 Bristo Square
Tel: +44(0)131 650 2777

Information Services
www.ed.ac.uk/is

Institute for Academic Development
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/institute-academic-development

International Office
www.ed.ac.uk/international-office
57 George Square
Tel: +44(0)131 650 4296

Library Online Catalogue
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/information-services/library-museum-gallery

Records Management Section
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/records-management-section
Email: recordsmanagement@ed.ac.uk
Tel: +44(0)131 651 4099

Student Accommodation Service
www.accom.ed.ac.uk/
Pollock Halls of Residence
Tel: +44(0)131 667 1971

Student Administration
www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/student-administration
Old College, South Bridge
Main Library, George Square
James Clerk Maxwell Building, King's Buildings
Tel: +44 (0)131 650 2845
Email: infopoint@ed.ac.uk

Student Counselling Service
www.ed.ac.uk/student-counselling
3rd Floor Main Library, George Square
Tel: +44 (0)131 650 4170
Paterson's Land, Moray House
Tel: +44(0)131 651 6200

Student Disability Service
www.ed.ac.uk/student-disability-service
3rd Floor, Main Library, George Square
Tel: +44(0)131 650 6828 (voice)
Tel: +44(0)131 650 9371 (text)

8.5   Appendix V: Summary of Responsibilities

This section sets out the responsibilities of each of the three parties contributing to the education and training of a postgraduate research student. These are the student him or herself, the student's supervisor(s) and the University.

8.5.1 The Student

1. Upholds the standards of professional behaviour expected of all University members.
2. Conforms to the conditions of their funding and the regulations of the University.
3. Takes charge of and dedicates themselves to their own development and completion of their degree.
4. Makes the best efforts to achieve agreed goals and timetable.
5. Acknowledges their sources of funding and the work of others in all publications and presentations.
6. Shows respect to all University members, whether students, academic staff, administration or support.
7. Respects the Intellectual Property that belongs to others.
8. Keeps supervisor and University informed of absences and issues that affect the student's ability to progress.
9. Keeps the University and supervisor informed about contact details.
10. Lets the University know of issues that affect the safety, well-being and performance of other University members.

8.5.2 The Supervisor

1. Upholds the standards of professional behaviour expected of all University members.
2. Provides advice that is in the best interests of the student and his or her training, ability to progress and career development.
3. Ensures that the student has all agreed resources needed for their training.
4. Respects the student as a part of the University community.
5. Respects the Intellectual Property that belongs to the student.
6. Meets regularly with the student.
7. Provides prompt feedback on the student's work.
8. Keeps the University informed about issues that affect the student.

8.5.3 The University, including Schools, Centres and Institutes where the student is based

1. Ensures appropriate supervision and training arrangements, including independent pastoral care.
2. Provides all agreed resources, including workspaces, equipment, supplies, supervision, training opportunities.
3. Provides a high-quality and safe researcher training experience for the student.
4. Ensures prompt and fair assessment of the student's work, including progression reports and thesis.
5. Ensures that the student receives periodic (for example at least annually) review and feedback on progress.
6. Ensures that academic standards of behaviour and performance are upheld.
7. Keeps the student informed about issues that affect the student's ability to progress.
8. Treats the student courteously and fairly irrespective of gender, age, race, religion, nationality, disability, sexual orientation, year in course.
9. Involves student representatives in decision-making situations that affect students.
10. Provides accurate information about the degree programme, the student's matriculation, performance, and assessment status.
11. Provides student support resources, including health care, counselling, advice, career, academic and transferable skills.
12. Provides access to the University cultural, social, and sporting facilities and opportunities.
13. Provides the administrative support needed for smooth delivery of the student's training.
14. Provides Complaints and Appeal mechanisms.