

UNIVERSITY OF THE  
WEST of SCOTLAND

UWS

Doctoral  
College



# Code of Practice

2023/24

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# Welcome

Dear Postgraduate Research Students,

First and foremost, it is my pleasure to welcome you to the University of the West of Scotland. You have begun your postgraduate research journey at one of Scotland's most innovative modern universities with origins dating back to 1897. I am delighted that through your studies you want to make a lasting societal contribution.

Notable researchers who worked at our University and made a global impact: Lewis Fry Richardson, a pioneer of modern mathematical techniques of weather forecasting, who was Principal of the Paisley Technical College, now the University of the West of Scotland from 1929 to 1940.

George Y. Haig who was a lecturer in Physics at Paisley Technical College and who developed a so called Haig Mount (or more frequently called Scotch Mount) for photographing star fields and comets – now being used by amateur astronomers worldwide.

Shamshad Akhtar Detho, development economist, diplomat and intellectual who serves as the Under-Secretary General of the United Nations as the head of UNESCAP. Prior to that, she served as the 14th Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, the first woman to assume this position. She also served as a senior adviser to Secretary-General of the United Nations Ban Ki-moon and the vice-President at the World Bank. Shamshad completed her PhD at UWS (then University of Paisley) in 1980.

Prof. Fiona Henriquez, expert in Parasitology and host-pathogen interactions within UWS School of Health & Life Sciences. Fiona's work in this area has led to 31 peer-reviewed publications, funding from both industry and charity funding bodies and world-wide collaborations with other academics, NHS and industry (UK, USA, Spain, Brazil and Italy).

UWS offers a truly international experience with more than 800 postgraduate research students from all over the world. The University has a vibrant community of research institutes, centres and groups. You will be aligned with one of them, helping you to co-create a highly desirable research environment through regular interactions with staff and students.

We believe that global challenges require interdisciplinary research and entrepreneurially minded researchers. The University therefore organises courses, research seminars, competitions, conferences and other events to encourage postgraduate research students to transcend the boundaries of their core research area and develop the necessary skills for interdisciplinary research. This will enable you to develop impactful research outputs, effectively present your work to a variety of different audiences and maximise your employability.

We want to make your research journey a rewarding experience and we are committed to providing a supportive environment that will enable you to conduct high quality postgraduate research. Regular communication with your supervisory team is a key requirement for successful progression and timely completion, and the Code of Practice is here to provide essential information to assist you, your Supervisors and Examiners.

Finally, make the most of the excitement and challenges of your research journey as it is of paramount importance to us that your time at UWS is an enjoyable one, equipping you for the future key roles in academia and beyond.



  
Professor Milan Radosavljevic  
Vice-Principal Research, Innovation & Engagement

# Admissions

Applying for postgraduate study is a simple process through our online application system.

There are four intakes for postgraduate research degrees throughout the year – February, April, June and October – you can choose which intake suits you best when you apply. If you have discussed your research proposal with your supervisor or PGR Coordinator in advance they may issue a provisional offer of admission subject to completion of the online application process.

Our step-by-step guide helps you complete your application:

[Research Degree Application Step-By-Step Guide](#)

## Step 1: Choose a course

We offer a range of postgraduate research degrees at MRes, MPhil, DProf or PhD level.

Decide which course you would like to study at UWS, making sure that it is the appropriate level of study for you.

## Step 2: Check the entry requirements

Make sure that your academic qualifications meet the requirements for your chosen course (most postgraduate degree courses will require you to hold an undergraduate degree from a UK institution if you've studied abroad, you'll need an equivalent qualification from an institution recognized by the UK National Recognition Information Centre).

## Step 3: Scholarships and funding

Financial support for postgraduate research study is limited, and is typically distributed by one of seven UK Research Councils. Visit <https://www.ukri.org/> to find out whether your field of research is eligible for funding.

[Find out more about scholarships and funding opportunities at UWS.](#)

## Step 4: Apply

You can apply for postgraduate research at UWS via our free online application system.

As part of the application process, you will need to provide digital copies of the following documents:

- Copy of your degree certificate(s)
- Copy of your academic transcript(s)
- English language proficiency test certificate (if English is not your first language)
- At least one academic reference, signed and on headed paper or sent from the referee's work email account (if you do not hold the reference, please provide the email address of your academic referee).
- A research proposal

Once you are ready you can submit your application through our online application system. You can apply for a postgraduate research degree right up to the start of the intake.

## Step 5: Application Process

After you submit your application, we will send you an email confirming that we have received your application within 24 hours. You will also be given log-in details for the system so that you can track your application.



## Step 6: Decision

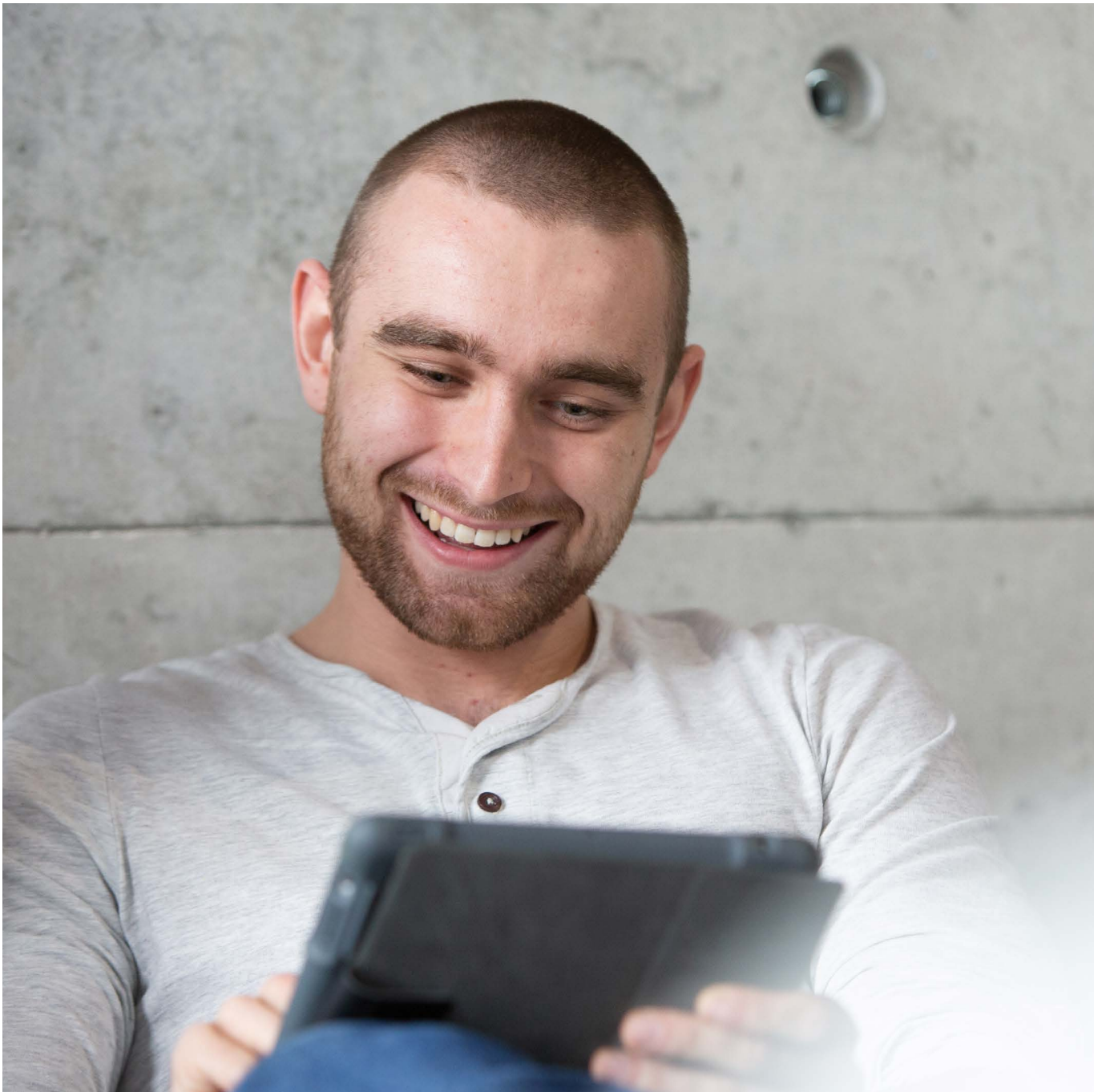
Once your application has been processed, we will contact you by email to confirm if it has been successful. This will include guidance on how to accept an offer and fee payment, if required.

Our Admissions team will make one of the following decisions:

- Unconditional offer: you already meet the necessary entry requirements
- Conditional offer: you still need to achieve the required qualifications. Once you meet these conditions, your offer will change to unconditional
- Unsuccessful: you are not considered to be suitably qualified
- You can also monitor the progress of your application on the UWS online application system.

## Step 7: Preparation

Once you receive and accept your unconditional offer, you're ready to enrol and study at UWS.



# Enrolment and Fees

All research students are required to enrol every year until your degree is conferred by Senate. All students can enrol online. Self-funded students are required to pay fees in order to enrol. If you are sponsored, then you are required to provide a letter from your sponsor to confirm this.

Please remember that enrolment is a necessary condition to be a registered student of UWS. If you do not enrol:

- You will not be entitled to use School or University facilities
- You will not be eligible to submit your thesis for examination

Furthermore, students who have not submitted progression reports or have not made satisfactory progress will not be eligible to enrol for the academic year and will be withdrawn (see Student Progress Monitoring on page 8).

There are normal and maximum periods for the submission of the thesis, as shown below. Requests to extend beyond the normal period of registration must be made to the Doctoral College, justifying the request on academic grounds with supporting evidence. Please be advised that the University has introduced absolute maximum periods of registration. This information can be found in Chapter 4 of the University Regulations.

Degree	Mode of Study	Normal	Maximum
MRes	Full Time	12 months	24 months
	Part Time	24 months	36 months
MPhil	Full Time	24 months	36 months
	Part Time	48 months	60 months
MPhil/PhD inc PhD Direct and PhD by prospective publication	Full Time	36 months	48 months
	Part Time	72 months	84 months
PhD by retrospective publication	Full Time	12 months	24 months
DBA	Full Time	36 months	48 months
	Part Time	48 months	60 months
DProf/EngD	Part Time	48 months	72 months

All students are required to pay 50% of the postgraduate student fee in order to enrol. International students are required to pay 50% of the tuition fee in order to receive a Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) and to enrol.

[Information on Money, Fees & Funding](#)

# University & Staff

## Responsibilities

### **a. Study space and school resources**

Full-time research students will be offered access to a desk and computing and laboratory facilities. Part time students will have access to shared facilities by arrangement locally with the School. Students who have exceeded their maximum periods of registration and have registration extended may be granted access to facilities on a case-by-case basis (by arrangement with Schools and/or Lead Supervisors on an annual basis, against agreed progression outcomes). Access to telephone services will be agreed by your school on the basis of need for the individual research study.

All students will have access to the resources required to undertake their defined research programme, including necessary consumables and/or expenses required to collect data, reasonable printing and access to agreed journals etc. Such resources will be defined and agreed at the outset of the programme of study. Schools will provide funds agreed in advance for standard consumable materials and for reasonable travel within the UK for data collection envisaged at the outset of the programme.

High value international travel or topic specific consumable materials or capital equipment should be considered and covered, subject to agreement, with the hosting research groups, centres or institutes.

All research students will have the opportunity on an equal basis with other students to be considered for any teaching or other work opportunities which will be promoted openly within Schools.

### **b. Supervision**

Supervision of postgraduate research students is undertaken by experienced, research-active members of academic staff. The School to which you are admitted is your base and will play a crucial role in providing guidance, resources and support for your research project. You and your project will have a Lead Supervisor and at least one other supervisor, who can support your development and the progress of your research.

An additional supervisor or advisor may be appointed to contribute particular specialist knowledge or a link with an external organisation. It is essential that you work closely and maintain regular contact with your supervisory team. There will be a statement of an agreement at confirmation of registration between the Lead Supervisor and the student as to an appropriate specified frequency of contact and the Skillforge system will issue reminders to students to arrange and record their meetings with their supervisory team.



# Student Progress Monitoring

Satisfactory progress is of paramount importance for students and the University. If students are not progressing at the expected rate the supervisors should inform the PGR Coordinator of the relevant academic school and Doctoral College immediately; issues should not be confined to the progression reports.

Progression monitoring is supported via the Skillsforge system. The system can be accessed at <https://skillsforge.uws.ac.uk>. This software aims to provide a recording and monitoring system to ensure that any potential problems or specific needs a student may have been highlighted at an early stage. It also encourages students to reflect on their progress and to meet their targets, leading to successful completion.

Chapter 4 Research Degrees, of the UWS Regulatory Framework sets out the general requirements for progress and transfer including engagement with students. The Doctoral College Progress Review Board (PRB) meets regularly to review the progress of all research students. The board will evaluate reports in Skillsforge including annual reports (all students) as well as any Transfer Reports and 6-month reports submitted in the session (if applicable).

All students are required to submit their 6-month report, annual progress reports and where applicable for their programme of student, a Transfer Report all using Skillsforge. It is important that students complete reports on time and note that satisfactory progress is commensurate with continued registration at UWS. Students beyond 3 years of FT study (6 years PT) are required to attach a completion plan, detailing steps taken to ensure completion within the maximum period of study.

6-month report: Aims to assess progress and to identify problems which might impact on successful completion. The template in Appendix 1 specifies the structure and required areas to be addressed in the report.

## **Annual report:**

The report must be submitted with an accompanying piece of written work (1500– 2500 words), in which the student details progress against specific milestones.

You can find out when reports are due by checking your timeline or milestones in Skillsforge. The system will also send a reminder to your registered email address before the due date. The template in Appendix 2 specifies the structure and required areas to be addressed in the report. More information is available in Appendix 1.

The assessor will oversee the student's progress and will discuss it with them at an annual meeting, attended by the supervisory team and the assessor. Students who are writing up or have submitted their thesis are exempt from the annual meeting. Following the meeting, the assessor will submit a report to the Doctoral College which confirms that the student should progress to the next year of their studies. In the case of students who have exceeded the usual period of study, a completion plan should be submitted detailing plans to submit within the maximum period of study.

**Transfer report:** The template in Appendix 3 specifies the structure and required areas to be assessed at the transfer event.





# Thesis and Examination

## **a. Preparing thesis for submission**

A student preparing a thesis for examination should carefully read Chapter 4 of the University Regulations, which details the required format and gives guidance on the maximum length of the thesis. You should also consult British Standard 4821 Recommendations for the Presentation of Theses and Dissertations: 1990. A copy is available for reference from the University Library. BSI has officially withdrawn this standard, but it should still be consulted as it provides detailed guidance in the presentation of print theses.

At the pre-examination stage, care should be taken to ensure that the work conforms to the requirements specified in University Regulations and the British Standards document referred to above.

The electronic thesis submitted for examination should be submitted by email to [pgr@uws.ac.uk](mailto:pgr@uws.ac.uk) with a fully completed and signed Thesis Submission form (RTS) and a copy of the Turnitin receipt which must be dated within 1 day of the formal submission. Care should be taken to ensure that the work conforms to the requirements specified in University Regulations and the British Standards document referred to above.

## **b. Submitting the thesis**

A thesis should be submitted for a Higher Degree by Research to the examiners when:

- Examination arrangements have been proposed, normally by the Lead Supervisor, and formally approved by Chair of the Doctoral College Board on behalf of the Board.
- The student and the Lead Supervisor have agreed that this is appropriate. However, the guidance contained in Chapter 4 of the University Regulations should be noted, since this acknowledges the student's right independently to submit a thesis.

The thesis should be submitted in PDF format by the student to the Doctoral College via Skillsforge, where its receipt is recorded, and sent to all members of the approved examining team.

## **c. Amending and submitting the thesis after examination**

**Minor corrections:** After the examination, minor amendments, and corrections to the thesis are often required. The University Regulations require that minor corrections are made to the thesis or portfolio normally within 3 months and are approved by the examiners prior to submission of the final copy of the thesis.

**Major corrections:** Where more significant changes or revisions are required to the thesis or portfolio, these must be made normally within 6 months, as specified by the examiners at the time of the oral examination.

**Resubmission:** Where a resubmission of the MPhil/PhD thesis is required, the maximum time allowable is 12 months from the date of the examination (see Chapter 4 of the University Regulations). Resubmission of the thesis may be with or without oral examination, as specified by the examiners at the time of the first oral examination.

Once any amendments/ corrections have been approved by, or on behalf of the examining team, the final thesis should be submitted to the Doctoral College in PDF format and this version will be checked in preparation for upload to the British Library EThOS e-theses online service.

## **d. Viva Voce examination arrangements**

At least three months before the submission of the thesis, for all postgraduate research degrees, the Lead Supervisor should make a formal application to the Doctoral College for approval of examination arrangements.

The examination of the thesis by an examining team, together with the oral examination or Viva Voce, provides the final judgement on whether the research has made a significant contribution to knowledge.

The Lead Supervisor/ school arrange the time and date. By arrangement, the examination may be in-person, hybrid, or fully online. The Doctoral College will issue all required paperwork and thesis for VIVA. Once the examination is complete this paperwork it should be signed by the examining team and returned to the Doctoral College, by the Chair, within 3 days of the Viva.

All higher degree candidates are examined by a team which must include at least one external and one internal examiner. Both must have experience in the examination of postgraduate research students in the UK. Where the candidate is a member of the permanent staff of the University, an additional external examiner must be appointed. It is important that external examiners are able to give assurance on the comparative standard of any thesis. A Chair will be appointed to oversee the examination and ensure it is conducted fairly and in line with University Regulations.

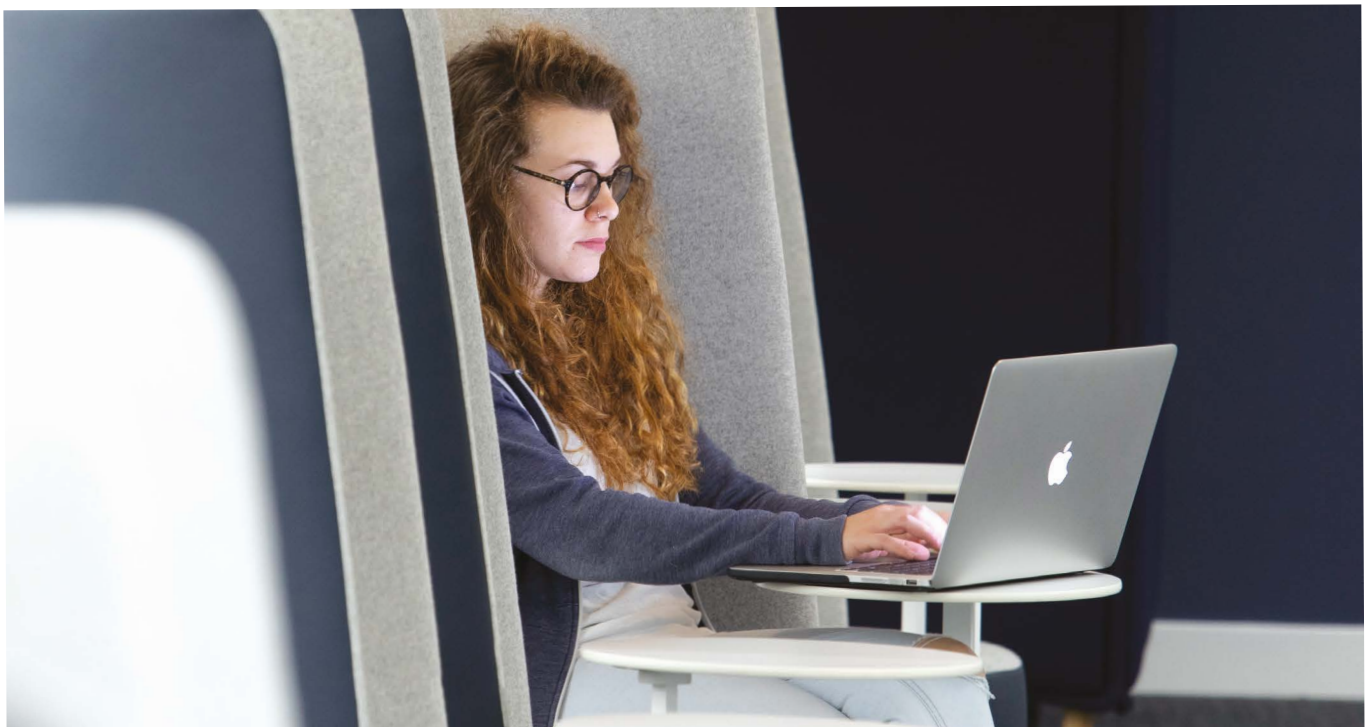
The title of the thesis is subject to final Board approval at this stage and once formally approved it may not be amended.

After the examining team has been approved, the Doctoral College will distribute the thesis, along with the appropriate paperwork and guidelines.

At the successful conclusion of a research programme, the Board will submit a recommendation to Senate to award the relevant research degree. Students must continue to enrol until they have been awarded their degree by Senate.

## **Examination results**

Each examiner will submit a preliminary report to the Chair in advance of the oral examination. Preliminary Reports should be available for discussion with the examining team prior to the student attending the Viva and submitted after the examination with the Joint Examiners' Report and Non-Examining Chair Form. At the oral examination (the Viva Voce), the examiners are asked to assess jointly whether the thesis and the candidate's defence meet the required standard.



## **PGR Examination: Examiners**

### **Chapter 4 Examiners**

- A. Each research degree or doctoral candidate shall be examined by at least two, but normally not more than three, examiners [subject to the requirements of Chapter 4] of whom at least one shall be an external examiner. Recognised Supervisor of the University (RTUs) may not be appointed as external examiners.
- B. An internal examiner shall not be any member of the candidate's approved supervisory team and shall not be the candidate's Internal Assessor [see Chapter 4]. The internal examiner should be a member of staff or a Recognised Supervisor of the University and experienced in examination of research degrees.
- C. Where the candidate to be examined and the internal examiner are members of the permanent staff of this University, a second external examiner should be appointed. Any person who is employed by the University on a short fixed-term contract, such as a research assistant, shall be exempt from the requirement that a second external examiner be appointed.
- D. The examination team should be selected to ensure that the whole breadth of experience, knowledge and skills required is represented. In relation to practice-based studies, at least one of the examining team must demonstrate a track record of examining such studies.

### **Role and Responsibilities**

**Internal Examiner:** Examines the thesis and participates in the Viva Voce Examination as an examiner independent of the examined work (i.e. internal examiner shall not be any member of the candidate's approved supervisory team and shall not be the candidate's Internal Assessor; see Chapter 4 of the University regulations).

**External Examiner(s):** Examines the thesis and participates in the Viva Voce Examination as an examiner independent of the University (see Chapter 4 of the University regulations).

### **Nomination**

The academic Schools nominate the Internal and External Examiners to the Chair of the Doctoral College Board using the following criteria in line with the Regulation 8:

- Internal Examiner has to be an academic member of staff (including Emeritus Professors) or a Recognised Supervisor of the University with experience of examining research students and knowledge of the University's Research Degree Regulations;
- External examiner has to be:
  - (1) independent of the University and of any collaborating establishment(s) and shall not have acted previously as the candidate's supervisor or adviser;
  - (2) not normally be either a supervisor of another candidate or an external examiner on a taught programme in the same School of the University;
  - (3) not normally have been a member of staff of the University during the past three years and
  - (4) not have acted as an external examiner of research degree candidates in the School within the previous 12 months.

## OVERALL EXAMINERS RESPONSIBILITIES

- Conduct examination rigorously: detailed and challenging questions
- Conduct examination fairly: student is given opportunity to defend the work
- Conduct examination equitably: cover all areas of work and thesis chapters within an agreed format
- Conduct examination without bias: culture, gender, background, context.

## PRE-VIVA EXAMINERS: DUTIES

- Read the thesis to be examined
- Complete Preliminary Examiner's Report (PER)
- Discuss PER's in peropd prior to student attending VIVA, or exchange in advance of meeting for more in depth discussion.

## VIVA EXAMINATION EXAMINERS: DUTIES

- Ext. Examiners starts with questions after Chair introduction
- Allow candidate to give short presentation (10min) if agreed
- When and if required provide constructive and supportive feedback
- Examiners may ask questions intermittently if so agreed
- Announce end of examination.

## POST-VIVA EXAMINERS: DUTIES

- Chairperson helps complete "Joint Examiners' Report" & immediately submit to Doctoral College
- Return any other documentation to Doctoral College (e.g. expenses form)
- Corrections/resubmission: agreed on the Nominated Examiner and send joint detailed feedback to candidate within 2 weeks.

## INTERVENTION: POSSIBLE ACTIONS

**CHAIRPERSON: DUTIES** (In case of bias, misconduct or unfairness, or examiners divert from agreed format that can disadvantage the candidate) (1) Temporary halt and private discussion with examiners or the candidate and (2) Ending the examination (most exceptionally).



# Appendix 1

## Six Month Progress Report

### TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT IN SKILLSFORGE

1. Detail research questions and objectives:
2. Summary of changes to research programme since commencement of study and justification for such changes.
3. Ethics: Have you submitted a proposal for ethical approval for your research to the school?
4. Will the application also be submitted to any other Ethics Committee outwith UWS?
5. Reflection on training since commencement of study with details of anticipated training needs
6. Reflection on milestones identified and progress towards achieving them with timeline
7. Highlight any issues you would like to raise with your Lead Supervisor/Assessor.

### TO BE COMPLETED BY THE LEAD SUPERVISOR

#### Progress & Engagement

8. Is the Student making satisfactory progress? Yes/No – Please supply details
9. Is the Transfer Event likely to take place within the expected timescale
10. Please add any additional comments regarding the student's progression.

### TO BE COMPLETED BY THE ASSESSOR

11. Review both the Student's Report and Lead Supervisors comments
12. Is the student making Satisfactory progress? Yes/No – please supply details
13. Please add any additional comments regarding the student's progression.

### FOR MPhil/PHD REGISTERED STUDENTS ONLY

14. Is the transfer event likely to take place within the expected timescale (18-26 months for FT and 36-52 month for PT students)?

# Appendix 2

## Annual Progress Report

### TO BE COMPLETED BY THE STUDENT

1. Draft title of PGR research
2. Abstract (max 300 words)
3. Account of work completed
4. Max 5000 words – as agreed with Lead Supervisor and should include (commensurate with the area and stage of research, and as applicable): Description of theoretical background; Research strategy, design and methodology; Literature review; preliminary or pilot investigations/ experiments; any published work.
5. List seminars and events you have attended in last 12 months (both internal and external)
6. My progress to date is as expected at this stage – Yes/No
7. What challenges (if any) do you anticipate over the coming 12 months?
8. Evidence of engagement, influence, and impact.
9. Evidence of knowledge and intellectual abilities.
10. Evidence of knowledge of research governance and organisation.
11. Evidence of personal effectiveness
12. Reflection on milestones identified and progress towards achieving them (append timetable for your supervisory team to review)
13. Outline your plan for the next 12 months (i.e. Transfer Event/Outputs/Research Developments/ Submission etc.)
14. Section to attach supplementary documents
15. Highlight any issues you would like to raise with your Lead Supervisor/Assessor

### TO BE COMPLETED BY THE LEAD SUPERVISOR

16. Review the Students Annual Report including any supplementary evidence
17. Is the student making Satisfactory progress? Yes/No – please supply details

### TO BE COMPLETED BY THE ASSESSOR

18. Review the students Annual Report and Lead Supervisor review and confirm progression

# Appendix 3

## Transfer Event Assessor's Report

### TO BE COMPLETED BY THE ASSESSOR

1. Are you satisfied that the research presented is the student's own work?
2. Did the student show a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of:
  - matters relating to the research?
  - background studies to the subject of the research?
3. Has the student maintained a record of meetings and progress?
4. Is the student Personal Development Plan satisfactory?
5. Is the schedule of work remaining clearly planned?
6. Is the project likely to be completed within the time allocated?
7. Are the supervision arrangements satisfactory?
8. Has the student access to all the resources necessary for the successful completion of the project?
9. Where there is a collaborating establishment, is the relationship with the student fruitful and positive?
10. Is the programme of research likely to result in an original contribution to knowledge?
11. Does the work demonstrate potential for publication?
12. In the case of a student whose research programme is part of a collaborative project, did the presentation demonstrate that the student is making an individual contribution?
13. If you have answered NO to any question above, please give details:
14. Comments on the written and oral presentation:
15. The assessor is required to select one of the following options:
16. The student has made sufficient progress for
17. PhD registration. The registration should be changed to PhD.
18. The student has made insufficient progress for PhD registration and the student should be
19. registered for and write up for MPhil submission only.
20. Re-examination within 3 months.
21. Current progress is inadequate for MPhil registration. Registration will be withdrawn.

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