



# Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Degrees 2025/26

## Disclaimer

Every effort is made to ensure that the information provided in this document is correct at the time of publication and accurately describes the research degree programmes offered by UHI and associated policy and procedures.

The online version of this document is the current definitive one and takes precedence in the event of any discrepancy.

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# Section 1 – Introduction and context

## Quality framework

Spread across the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, our distinctive partnership of independent colleges and research institutions is locally based and rooted in communities, but with national and international reach and significance.

The University's origins go back many years, but the partnership seen today was awarded full university status on 1 February 2011.

The Code of Practice for Research Degrees represents a quality framework for the admission, supervision, progression and examination of all postgraduate research students at UHI and provides guidance for research student applicants and enrolled students, as well as staff concerned with the supervision, support and management of research students.

Along with any local information that may be provided by their Academic Partner, research students should consider this document to be their core student handbook, providing information to enable them to get the most out of their time at UHI.

The Code of Practice - and [Section 14b - Postgraduate research degree regulations](#) - are consistent with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and are reviewed annually to reflect changes in University policy and/or national guidelines, including the [UKRI Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training](#).

Anyone wishing to comment on this Code of Practice, especially where suggestions for enhancement are being made, should contact [gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk)

## Governance framework

The University achieved research degree awarding powers in June 2017. Academic Council approved relevant regulations in December 2016, applicable from 2017-18 onwards for all students registered for research awards made by UHI and for the management and standards of research programmes and awards.

The University's academic standards are governed and maintained through its regulation and policy framework. In addition, the procedures and arrangements detailed in this code are overseen by the UHI Graduate School and are in place to support the continued assuring of research degree academic standards and the enhancement of the postgraduate research student experience.

Read more about the role of the [UHI Graduate School](#) and the [University's regulatory framework](#).

The Dean of Research and Innovation is responsible for all aspects of the University's Graduate School and the associated infrastructure to support research students and supervisory teams.

For all relevant postgraduate research-related matters, the University's Academic Council has devolved responsibility to the following committees - a list of committee members and meeting dates can be found in [PGR Manager](#) (staff/student login).

## Research Degrees Committee

Research Degrees Committee is responsible for overseeing the admission, registration, support, progression and examination of research students and for the recommendation to Academic Council of the final degree award. Specifically, the committee shall:

- approve research student applications,
- consider reports relating to research student progress monitoring,
- approve requests relating to changes in terms of study (eg, extensions and suspensions),
- approve membership of examination panels,
- approve examiner recommendations for the award of research degrees,
- monitor and review policies and procedures relating to research students,
- monitor and review research student support issues,
- maintain oversight of skills training for research students and training for staff in research supervision
- maintain oversight of research students' complaints and appeals,
- oversee the approval and re-approval of academic research areas and monitor and report on the meeting of any established conditions.
- ratify MRes Programmes,
- oversee the monitoring of quality assurance and enhancement and take appropriate action on related issues as required,
- aspire to recruit and retain research students with high potential.

A list of committee members and up-coming committee meeting dates can be seen in PGR Manager

## Graduate School Committee

Graduate School Committee ensures the satisfactory progression of postgraduate research students through the progress monitoring review process. It is the duty of GSC to highlight any concerns about student progression to supervisors and students and to make remedial recommendations where necessary. The committee will also discuss general issues, including training requirements that emerge from the monitoring process and report these to RDC for consideration.

## Student Engagement

Regularly gathering formal and informal feedback from postgraduate research students about their experience is a key part of our enhancement activities.



## Postgraduate Research Student Representatives

Each academic partner is encouraged to nominate a postgraduate research student representative to attend relevant local committee meetings, in order to facilitate dialogue and feedback on the student experience and enable any local issues to be considered in a timely fashion.

Research student representatives attend the non-confidential business of the Graduate School's Research Degrees Committee as well as the university's Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee.

## Postgraduate Research Expertise Survey (PRES)

The only UK, sector-wide survey to gain insight from PhD and Research Masters students about their learning and supervision experience. Run by The Higher Education Academic, the survey is confidential and focuses on students' experiences of supervision, resources, the research community, progress and assessment and skills and professional development.

We conduct PRES every other year and in the most recent 2024 survey, we scored an overall student satisfaction rating of 83%. This represents a noticeable improvement in the result for UHI from 2022, which was 74%. Respondents indicated that they were particularly pleased with our performance in areas including supervision, research skills and progression and support. The results also highlighted areas where we can make improvements, such as in retention, research culture, resources, professional development and community. We are proactively addressing these issues strategically and systematically.

## Student Support

UHI has a duty to provide academic and pastoral support mechanisms for research students and student support is delivered through several routes, including access to relevant policies and documents. Guidance and support are available in the following areas:

- Academic or other related areas affecting academic progress.
- Health and wellbeing.
- Welfare and counselling.
- Bullying or harassment.
- Finance and hardship.
- Career's information and employability information, advice and guidance.
- Accommodation.

Through the research degree application process, the Head of the academic partner where the student will be registered confirms their commitment to providing supervision and support services. Where the student is linked to a centre, institute or equivalent that is attached to an academic partner, or where a student is hosted at another academic partner, there is a collective responsibility to provide appropriate student support through local provision.

Academic partners will have a nominated [Student Support Officer or Team](#) and can direct students to appropriate local guidance and support, including counselling and welfare services.

**Red Button** – UHI's informal problem-resolution and feedback mechanism, available for all students. Research students also have several other points of contact, as outlined below. Also see 'Different routes of support'.

## UHI Graduate School

The UHI Graduate School is a focal point for the management and administration of the postgraduate research student journey from application to award, across the entire UHI partnership and provides support for all research degree students, their supervisors and everyone involved in the postgraduate research journey.

As a central point of contact for guidance, advice and support, the Graduate School team can be approached directly by any research student or supervisor - [gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk)

## Postgraduate Research Coordinator

A Postgraduate Research Coordinator is available at each academic partner, institute or centre and acts as a local point of contact and referral for student and supervisor queries:

- Executive Office: *Centre for Health* – TBC; Dr Michelle Beattie. *Centre for History* – Prof David Worthington. *Language Sciences Institute* – Prof Conchúr Ó Giollagáin
- Highland Theological College – Dr Jamie Grant
- UHI Inverness – Melanie Manwaring-McKay
- UHI Moray – please contact [gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk)
- UHI North, West and Hebrides - Prof Roxane Andersen; Dr Steve Taylor
- Orkney College: *Archaeology Institute* – Prof Jane Downes *Institute for Northern Studies* – Prof Donna Heddle
- Perth College – Dr Rosalind Bryce
- Sabhal Mòr Ostaig – Abigail Burnyeat
- SAMS – Prof Bhavani Narayanaswamy
- UHI Shetland – Dr Chevonne Angus; Dr Simon Clarke

## Supervisory Teams

Along with providing academic guidance and support, the student's supervisory team has a responsibility for pastoral care, offering welfare advice where appropriate and directing students to specialist student support services as necessary.

## Third Party Advisers

The Graduate School appoints all research students with a Third Party Adviser - a research-active member of staff who is not part of the student's supervisory team and is out with the research subject area.

This support system enables research students to have an objective discussion about their studies and receive independent academic advice concerning any matter affecting academic progress by providing:

- pastoral support outside of the supervisory environment
- a mechanism for early identification of potential problems, thus avoiding impeding progress
- a dispassionate view if difficulties arise.

## Student with support needs

Research students who disclose support needs can engage with their local disability support team to discuss their needs and, where appropriate, agree a Personal Learning Support Plan.

Students associated with **UHI Executive Office** will receive wellbeing and support services through UHI Inverness. Areas associated with UHI Executive Office include Health (Division of Biomedical Sciences, Department of Nursing and Midwifery, Division of Rural Health and Wellbeing), the Centre for History, and the Language Sciences Institute.

More information is available [here](#). Our disability processes [privacy notice](#) explains how the university will process and use personal data. Please ensure this is read before discussing any support needs with a disability adviser.

Making early contact with the local support services will enable appropriate support to be negotiated and put in place as early as possible; choosing not to disclose may have an impact on the support available.

[See section 2 - General principles](#)

## HISA (UHI Student Association)

The Highlands and Islands Students' Association (HISA) represents the interests of all students at the university and its academic partners at a regional level. HISA aims to make sure the student voice is at the heart of all decisions about learning and teaching and the student experience and to ensure the best student experience possible. HISA has postgraduate research student representation on its committees and can act as an advocate for students as well as a source of support. More details [here](#)

## UHI Careers and Employability Centre

The University's Careers and Employability Centre encourages all students to look creatively at possibilities and consider what career opportunities exist across the Highlands and Islands and beyond.

[UHI Futures](#) is designed to support career development for students and graduates, regardless of graduation date.

## Different routes of support

There are many routes of support and these are indicated below.

A student's supervisory team - especially the Director of Studies - would normally be a student's first point of contact, but the UHI Graduate School and/or HISA can also be contacted.

Students are encouraged to raise any concerns or issues during their supervisor meetings and note them in the PGR Manager supervisor meeting records function and progress monitoring reviews.

Who to contact for help with:	Graduate School Office <a href="mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk">gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk</a>	Director Of Studies and/or other supervisors	Third Party Advisor (details on your PGR Manager record)	<a href="#">UHI Careers Service</a>	<a href="#">Academic Partner Student Support</a>	<a href="#">Mental Health Support</a>	<a href="#">Doctor</a>	International Admissions <a href="mailto:admission@uhi.ac.uk">admission@uhi.ac.uk</a>
Suspension, extension, changing supervisor, changing mode or programme	✓							
Examination process, thesis submission	✓	✓						
Academic challenges with your research	✓	✓	✓		✓			
Concerns relating to your supervisor (s)	✓		✓					
Health issues that are impacting on your studies		✓			✓	✓	✓	
Declaring a disability and putting a PLSP in place					✓			
Information on financial support	✓				✓			

Information on financial support (research project, training, or conference)	✓	✓						
Additional resources or training required (e.g., equipment)		✓						
Career advice		✓		✓				
Specialist support for mental health challenges					✓	✓		
International student visa enquiries								✓

## Section 2 – Applications, admissions and induction

### General principles

#### Research degrees offered by UHI

**Higher Doctorate** - available to current or former members of UHI staff, on the basis of academic publications and significant personal contribution to the advancement of knowledge in their field. The following awards are available:

- Doctor of Letters (DLitt)
- Doctor of Science (DSc)
- Doctor of Divinity (DD)
- Doctor of Technology (DTech)
- Doctor of Engineering (DEng)
- Doctor of Education (DEd)
- Doctor of Social Science (DSocSc)
- Doctor of Arts (Darts)

**PhD** (Doctor of Philosophy) - Doctoral students are registered on a PhD programme from the outset and are required to undergo a formal probationary monitoring review to have their PhD registration confirmed.

**MPhil** (Master of Philosophy) – exit award from PhD only

**MRes** (Master of Research)

#### Entry points

**Higher Doctorate** - the application deadline is at the end of September, with full submission (if application approved) due by the end of the following March.

**PhD** and **MRes** – there are two set intakes per year with their own corresponding deadlines 2-3 months prior to each start date.

#### Location of study

Research study may be undertaken at a recognised UHI location and/or in association with other research centres in the UK and overseas. Also see 'distance mode' below.

A student will be linked to an academic partner, and this will normally be where they are physically based when enrolled as a full-time student. If enrolled as part-time or by distance mode, this will normally be the location they will attend when visiting their supervisors or using facilities on an ad-hoc basis.

If the student is to be physically located at a different academic partner, the Director of Studies should liaise with all concerned to secure agreement and are strongly advised to complete a PGR Supervision and Hosting Agreement, available from the Graduate School.

## Accessibility and inclusion

The University is committed to compliance with the Equality Act 2010 by endeavouring to ensure that any research applicant declaring a disability, health or medical condition is treated fairly and without discrimination or disadvantage.

For instance, it is against the law to discriminate against anyone because of:

- Age
- Gender reassignment
- Being married or in a civil partnership
- Being pregnant or on maternity leave
- Disability
- Race including colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Any such declaration does not form part of the research degrees selection process, as applications are considered according to our published academic criteria.

Early dialogue between the applicant and relevant staff is encouraged as this will enable the Academic Partner's student disability support team to establish a clear understanding of the disclosed disability and informally assess the reasonable adjustments needed.

If the University is unable to provide the required support, or if there are overriding concerns about health and safety or professional fitness to practice requirements, the University will continue to work closely with the applicant, to explore all of the available options before confirming whether we can offer a place on the chosen programme.

For further support and information, please explore the [Equality Advisory and Support Service \(EASS\)](#).

## Entry Requirements

### Qualifications

The standard benchmark for being admitted to a research degree is outlined in the [Postgraduate Research Degree Regulations](#) and is normally:

- A postgraduate Master's degree, from a degree awarding body recognised by the UK government, or equivalent, or

- A first or upper second-class honours degree from a degree awarding body recognised by the UK government, or equivalent, or
- Other qualifications or experience that affords sufficient evidence of an applicant's ability to work at the academic level associated with the target award.

The [UHI Terms and Conditions for Applicants and Students](#) sets out the terms and conditions upon which an applicant may be made an offer or enrolled at the University.

## Transfer of registration to UHI

Applicants who are registered as a research degree student at another comparable institution may apply to transfer their research degree registration to UHI. Applicants seeking to transfer should follow the standard [Graduate School application process](#) and submit the required application form and associated documentation.

This option is only available for work which has not previously contributed to an academic award. To be eligible, applicants must be prepared to register at UHI for at least 12 months (full-time) or 24 months (part-time) prior to the date of the final submission of the thesis. Where applicable, the standard PhD probationary review process should take place within the first 3 months (full-time) or 6 months (part-time) of the start date.

## References

All applicants must include two references; these should normally be academic references, although exceptions will be made in some circumstances, e.g. applicants who have been out of education for more than three years may submit one academic and one professional reference. At least one reference must be from someone who is independent of the proposed supervisory team.

## English language requirements

Applicants whose first language is not English - including those who intend to study by distance - may be required to provide evidence of their English language ability through certified proof of competence.

For more information see the [University's English language requirements and UKVI English language test guidance](#).

The minimum English language requirements to study research at the University is IELTS Academic Test, or equivalent, with overall score of 6.5 with no element below 6.0. The test should be taken no more than two years prior to the planned enrolment date.

Applicants who do not satisfy this criterion may be offered entry on the condition that they either achieve the minimum entry requirement by themselves or successfully complete an approved Language Centre 6-week or 12-week Summer School Programme before the commencement of their degree.



## Student Route visas

A Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) must be issued by the University to apply for a Student Route visa - a CAS cannot be issued until an unconditional offer is made by the Graduate School.

Certain science and technology subjects require Academic Technology Approval Scheme (ATAS) clearance before an application can be made for a Student Route visa. Applicants who need to apply for ATAS clearance will receive a conditional offer which will include a statement to support their ATAS application.

For further information regarding the ATAS application process please see [here](#).

Holders of a Student Route visa must be aware of, and adhere to, the immigration rules. Failure to comply with rules risks an individuals' student status and may result in an adverse UK immigration record and being asked to leave the UK. Also at risk is the University's sponsor licence and the status of all the international students studying at UHI.

Further guidance on applying for a Student Route visa can be found [here](#)

## Data Protection

UHI and academic partners are registered under the Data Protection Act 2018 and will hold and process personal data for all purposes connected with our statutory and business requirements.

Where required, personal information may be supplied to other official agencies e.g., [Higher Education Statistics Agency \(HESA\)](#), Scottish Funding Councils for Further and Higher Education.

The information may also be aggregated with other information and used for our own or other research purposes; used for the purposes of providing references, if we are asked to so do, plus information on individual progress may be disclosed to an organisation providing financial support.

## Applicant and Student personal data

The University is committed to protecting personal information and being clear about what information we collect from you and how we use it.

Our [privacy notices](#) explain how the University will process and use personal data and are supplementary to its HE admissions and enrolment privacy notices.

Students are responsible for ensuring their personal data held on the university's student records system is accurate and current. Under the Data Protection Act 2018, students have the right of access to the data held about them by the University, HESA or other data controllers.

## Application Procedures

There are typically two ways that applications for PhD or MRes degrees are made:

- **Speculative** - where individuals interested in studying for a research degree might approach academic staff informally to discuss their plans and seek advice, either about

their suitability for research or to enquire about leading the development of their own research project, or

- **Responsive** - where individuals respond to an advertisement for a defined, academic-led project, usually funded by a Studentship.

## Interviews

All PhD and MRes applicants, including speculative applicants and applicants for transfer/recognition of prior learning, must be interviewed, either in person or by video conference.

The interview format may vary, depending on the academic partner and/or funders' requirements. It may be an informal chat with the proposed Director of Studies or the entire supervisory team or a more formal panel interview as part of the application process for a funded position.

## Formal offers

Formal offer letters may only be issued by the UHI Graduate School, although a prospective Director of Studies may communicate the result of an interview informally.

An unconditional offer may only be made where the applicant has all the necessary qualifications and experience as outlined in our entry requirements.

Where the applicant currently lacks a necessary qualification or requirement, e.g., the completion of a taught programme or an English language qualification, a conditional offer may be made, with these conditions having to be met before an unconditional offer can be issued.

## Timescales

We ask that deadlines for research degree (RD1) applications are adhered to.

Application deadlines adhere closely to Research Degree Committee meetings. The candidate can expect to hear an outcome of their application normally around 1 month after application submission to the Graduate School.

There should not be any delays in issuing an unconditional offer to an international candidate as these decisions are now based on academic merit only.

## Distance mode

The following information outlines specific requirements and considerations for research degrees that are conducted by distance.

### Definition of research degrees by distance

A student's main place of residency is overseas or outside of Scotland and not within relatively easy access to a UHI Academic Partner campus or learning centre. Research students who are away from the University to undertake fieldwork, etc. are not classified as studying by distance.

Most of the research is undertaken away from the University, where relevant resources are largely available locally or online and the research project is not dependent on the University's on-site facilities.

A research degree by distance is not a split-site degree, where the student spends time at both the University and another institution within a fully collaborative structure. For split-site PhDs a written agreement is always required with the other organisation, while for distance learning the primary relationship is normally with the research student.

## Principles

Research degrees by distance may be undertaken on either a full-time or part-time basis and are subject to the normal research degree timeframes, programme management and assessment procedures as described elsewhere in this Code of Practice and in the Postgraduate Regulations, Section 14B Postgraduate Research Degree Regulations.

The final degree awarded for distance mode is the same as for on-campus study, as the award criteria are identical, and the degree is conducted and examined with the same rigour and quality measure.

A research degree by distance requires the same commitment for study as any research degree, so it is vital that the student can make the commitment, and the Academic Partner is able to offer the necessary support.

It is expected that students would normally spend a minimum of 6 months (PhD) or 2 months (MRes) on-site at the University across the course of their registration. The length and timing of these visits should be agreed with the supervisory team according to project-specific requirements. If there is likely to be a need for on-campus attendance for more than 6 consecutive months, it would be preferable to identify this early in discussions so it can be recorded on the research degree application, RD1.

Distance mode will not always be feasible, particularly in lab-based disciplines where appropriate local facilities are not available and/or where regular access to university on-site facilities is required.

Studying for a research degree by distance is not permissible if it contravenes the regulations of any funders.

Students should ensure that they have access to an appropriate local support environment; there must also be access to local and University-wide research activities through a combination of remote links and scheduled visits.

## International students

Research by distance is available to international students, and any on-site visits – and the process for securing a visa - must follow the requirements of the UK Government at the time of travel; these requirements may change over the course of the degree programme.

A Standard Visitor visa should be obtained to visit the UK to undertake short-term activities specifically related to the research project. A Student Route visa cannot be obtained for these visits.

The responsibility to meet visa requirements remains with the student and the University cannot guarantee that an international student studying by distance will be able to secure a Standard Visitor visa for each visit.

International students should obtain a visa support letter from the University's Graduate School Office, as this must be provided with appropriate documentation to support a visa application.

Email [gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk) with the reason and dates of your visit and, if you will not be based at your Home Academic Partner for the duration, details of where you will be visiting.

See [this guidance](#) for more visa information for international students who are planning a UK visit to undertake activities related to their project.

## Approval and admissions

Distance mode applicants must meet the normal admission requirements for research degree programmes.

Applicants whose first language is not English – and who do not hold a degree from a UK university – will be asked to provide evidence of language competency according to the [University's requirements](#).

Additional information will be obtained through the formal application process to ensure that the prospective student and supervisory team are able to meet the extra commitments required for distance study. Specifically, the following should be discussed and considered at an early stage:

1. Can the applicant demonstrate an ability to undertake research independently e.g., by previous distance learning experience, presentations at conferences, professional or academic publications) and is self-motivated in working away from more regular face-to-face interaction with a supervisory team?
2. Can the required academic supervision be provided remotely, and with expected regularity and rigor?
3. Will there be a need to access necessary specialist resources, e.g., library, laboratory facilities, fieldwork locations, studio/creative space not already available at the student's home or locally, e.g., Wasps Studios?
4. Where necessary, is there agreement for use of resources owned or managed by another person, institution, or organisation? Is the project dependent on these resources being available? Please note: the university will not take on responsibility for overseeing necessary local arrangements and any such arrangements are agreed and undertaken at the risk of the student.
5. Will the applicant have access to suitable study space, IT facilities and/or technological equipment that will enable them to engage with the University remotely, i.e., email, videoconferencing, online materials?
6. If required, is there access to local support for any study-related disability or wellbeing needs?
7. Will the applicant require specific training and development – if so, how will this be accessed?

As for all research degree applications, a formal offer can only be made by the Graduate School Office once approval has been authorised by the University's Research Degrees Committee.

If the applicant's research is dependent on an employer or another organisation, a letter should be supplied from the employer/organisation, confirming support for the application.

The details and frequency of any visits to the University required to complete the project e.g., campus or site visits, must be considered as part of the application process (see Principles). For international students, guidance must be sought from the University's international admissions team regarding visa requirements for visits. See this guidance for more information.

## Changes in location of study

Any change to a student's registration, including location of study, requires Research Degrees Committee approval.

An application to study by distance is normally only made during the admissions process. In exceptional circumstances, and with Director of Studies support, current campus-based research students may be allowed to change their location of study to distance mode. In such cases, the additional information required as part of the application process (see below 'Approval and admissions', questions 1-7) must be submitted to [gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk) for Research Degrees Committee approval.

On-campus international students with a student visa who, in exceptional circumstances, wish to change to studying by distance, must seek advice from University's international admissions department; a move to distance mode will require the withdrawal of the University's sponsorship of the student's visa, with the student relying on securing Standard Visitor visas for any further visits to the University.

A student studying by distance with a minimum of 12-months (FT) or 24-months (PT) standard registration time remaining may make a request to change to campus-based study. Initially, the student must consult with their Director of Studies, who should consider the feasibility of the request in terms of practical arrangements and available local resources. There is no automatic right for this change to be approved by the University.

International students studying by distance who wish to change to campus-based study will require a Student Route visa which is sponsored by the University and must be secured in their country of residence. Advice should be sought from the Graduate School Office at the earliest opportunity. It should be noted that there is no guarantee that UKVI will approve a student route visa application.

## Tuition fees and costs

The tuition fees for students studying by distance mode are normally the same as for campus-based study. Students must arrange and cover the costs for their visits to the University, including travel, accommodation, and any visa requirements. These additional costs do not form part of the tuition fees.

### Postgraduate research tuition fees

## Supervision

In all cases, the supervisory requirements must be met, as set out in the Postgraduate Regulations Section 14B Postgraduate Research Degree Regulations and elsewhere in this Code of Practice.

The significant supervisory characteristic for students studying by distance will be that they engage with their supervisors mostly through electronic means. There should be a clear

understanding between the student and the supervisors on what constitutes reasonable access if advice is required outside of pre-arranged supervisory meetings.

Supervisors must be aware of their responsibilities in relation to students studying by distance; the time and commitment required for distance learning supervision will be no less, and may be more, than for supervision of students based on-campus.

Supervisory meeting records must be kept in the University's online postgraduate research management system, PGR Manger.

## Student support and representation

The University has a duty of care for the welfare of all its students, and as for on-campus students, the supervisory team must, collectively, ensure that pastoral considerations are included as part of the supervisory process.

Along with the Graduate School Office team, students studying by distance mode will have online access to local student support staff although some services may be limited for students not based on campus.

Students studying by distance mode will have the opportunity to engage in relevant Committees and on-line meetings, dependent on any time-difference limitations.

[See Section 1 – Introduction and context/Student support](#)

## Attendance at the university

Students studying by distance would normally be expected to spend a minimum of six months (PhD) or two months (MRes) on-site over the course of their registration - this requirement is the same for full-time and part-time attendance.

The length and timing of these visits should be agreed with the supervisory team according to project-specific requirements and planned well in advance.

The Director of Studies is responsible for ensuring that students studying by distance have access to an appropriate place to work and suitable equipment during visits.

For international students relying on obtaining a Standard Visitor visa, the Director of Studies must:

1. Ensure that students are reminded to review the UK Visa and Immigration online information, so that they are aware of current visa rules,
2. Ensure that students obtain, from the University's Graduate School Office, a visa support letter prior to each visit to assist in the visa application process,
3. Ensure the student presents their Standard Visitor visa for scanning to their local admissions office upon immediate arrival for each visit to the UK.

[See this guidance](#) for more visa information for international students who are planning a UK visit to undertake activities related to their project.

## Progress monitoring reviews and PhD thesis panel arrangements

The progress monitoring process is the same for distance mode student as for all research students, with the review completed online through PGR Manager.

As for all research students, a review of their training needs must take place regularly, and at least when preparing for a progress review. Distance mode PhD students may, in agreement with their Director of Studies, plan an on-campus visit to coincide with their Probationary monitoring review, so the required thesis panel can be in-person. However, this is not a formal requirement, and the thesis panel can be undertaken by video conference.

Consideration must be given as to how to satisfy identified training needs for distance mode students, either at their home location; online (through the Graduate School's training sessions or via external providers); or during on-campus visits. This includes exploring any opportunities for Doctoral students to be involved in the teaching responsibilities of their academic partner.

[See Section 5 – Monitoring student progress](#)

[See Section 7 - Skills training and personal development](#)

## Assessment

All standard regulations and procedures apply, including thesis submission and the oral examination (viva voce).

There is no regulatory requirement for the oral examination to be undertaken in person, on site, as the University allows for the viva to be held online by video conference.

Where it is agreed that distance mode students should undertake their viva in person, the date of the viva should be arranged in good time so appropriate travel, accommodation and any visa arrangements can be made. For international students, this should normally be at least 16 weeks in advance.

[See Section 10 – Viva voce examination](#)

## Enrolment and induction

### Enrolment

Before commencing studies, all students are required to register online with UHI and follow the enrolment process. During the process, students should update any missing personal details, check entry qualifications, academic records, set up or renew access to computing facilities and email, check/pay fees and agree to abide by the University's rules, regulations and procedures.

Students can also update their personal details at any point throughout the year via the student records system [UHI Records](#).

### Induction and training

The Graduate School arranges two induction events during the academic year. The events are for all newly enrolled postgraduate research students and are designed to provide an understanding of what it means to be a research student at UHI, point out sources of key information and support and provide an overview of essential research student processes.

[See Section 3: Learning Resources](#)

A local PGR induction should be arranged at the academic partner, to ensure that students are aware of local procedures and policies. The PGR Co-ordinator, or other nominated person, may be responsible for organising this - alternatively the Director of Studies may provide induction information on a one-to-one basis.

The Graduate School's [SharePoint site](#) provides staff with guidance and checklists relating to enrolment and induction (staff login required).

Induction is part of a broader range of training and networking opportunities, including the annual Staff and Student Conference and a suite of professional development and generic skills training courses.

**[See Section 7: Training resources](#)**

## Council Tax

Full-time enrolled students are exempt from council tax and confirmation of their full-time status can be obtained through [UHI Records](#) or [gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk). Students who suspend incur a liability and part-time students and students beyond their standard period of registration may be required to pay council tax – ultimately, it is the students' responsibility to determine their eligibility for exemption.



## Section 3 – Practicalities & conditions of study

### Learning resources

#### Desk and computer

All research students will have access to the use of a desk and networked computer. Dependent on the facilities available, specific desk space may not be guaranteed and may only be available based on hot-desking or through a local booking system. However, it is recognised that the nature of the research may define the need for a student to have a dedicated desk/computer, and this should be identified locally as part of the admissions process.

#### Technologies at UHI

Once fully enrolled, students will have access to various technologies – find out [what these are](#) [how to use them](#).

#### Student ID card and email

Enrolled students can be issued a student ID card through their academic partner (EO-enrolled students should contact the Graduate School.) All students can access a digital ID card via UHI Records - the Student Hub page will include a quick link to open the student ID badge.

A student e-mail address will also be set up and will be used for all UHI communications, including emails from the Graduate School. It is the student's responsibility to check their e-mail on a regular basis - the failure to check e-mail, or non-receipt of e-mail due to a mailbox being over quota, or the non-delivery of a message to a non-UHI account, cannot be used as grounds for an academic appeal.

Those wishing to use a personal email address must set up automatic forwarding to ensure mail from their student account is forwarded.

Details on how to set up automatic forwarding of emails can be found [here](#). Search 'forward email to another email account'.

#### Library Services

As well as local study spaces and print book collections, research students and staff are supported by a central library support service, specifically aimed at researchers - for more information see [here](#)

#### Virtual Research Environments

[PGR Manager](#) - enables online workflows to manage research student processes.

[Brightspace](#) - UHI's online learning environment - research students have their own designated area **URESEARCH-Research Course**.

Changes to Registration, aka Candidature Management requests (section 4) and Progress Monitoring reviews (section 5) should be submitted through PGR Manager. The system is being developed to also manage thesis submission and examination processes.

Brightspace provides details on a wide range of topics, including internal and external training resources and funding information. It is strongly recommended that this area is routinely checked, or a notification set when an announcement is added.

## Tuition fees and miscellaneous charges

The **annual tuition fee** is applied to all research degree programmes, for all years, within the standard period of study for the degree. Tuition fees will increase annually in line with inflation, with the Home (UK) rate normally in line with UK Research Council rates. Other fees will apply during thesis pending, continuation and extension periods.

Please also refer to the [Fees Policy](#).

**Additional programme fees**, sometimes referred to as 'bench fees', may be set locally by the student's academic partner for some or all years of standard registration. These are set to cover additional costs related to a research project, often in STEM research projects, but could apply to other areas. As each research project is unique, this fee is determined by the academic partner during the application process and details will be included in the offer letter.

Invoicing and collecting payment are the responsibility of the finance department of the student's registered academic partner and students should contact their local finance office directly for information or to discuss any problems regarding the payment of fees.

## Conditions of study

### Registration and enrolment: year one

All research students are required to register at the beginning of the first year of study - details regarding registration is sent to all new students by the Graduate School.

Registration involves going through an online process of checking and confirming/providing personal information to complete the enrolment process. The following should be noted:

- Students holding a Student Route visa – must attend in person to confirm visa details. \*
- Until enrolment has been completed, it is not possible to access any university services.
- At first enrolment – and annually thereafter, based on the start date – students and/or their sponsors become liable for payment of tuition fees and additional programme fees (where relevant).

*\* following the Point-Based System for immigration by UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI), all those holding a Student Route Visa must provide a copy of all pages of their passport. Copies of these documents remain on file alongside copies of academic transcripts/certificates, English language proficiency certificates and all relevant contact details. All successful applications under the Student Route Visa after 31 October 2024 will receive an eVisa (a digital version of their immigration status information) rather than a vignette and a physical biometric residence permit (BRP). The validity of the Student Route permission will be confirmed on the eVisa. All students will need to create a UKVI account to access their eVisa and view their immigration status. Students are required to obtain a share code, which can be used to prove an individual's immigration status and send the share code to the Graduate School Office ([gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk)) – use this link to get your share code <https://www.gov.uk/view-prove->*

*immigration-status*. The university will require to check the date on which you entered the UK to ensure the validity of your Student Route Visa permission and that you can study.

## Annual re-enrolment

Subject to satisfactory progress reviews, completed according to their start date, continuing students are required to re-enrol in August each year to acquire a new academic year student record.

An email reminder is sent by the University's student records office, and students must re-enrol promptly to avoid disruption to their student status or access to IT systems, including PGR Manager.

Funded students should be aware that the continuation of stipend payments is dependent on timely re-enrolment.

All students should be aware that continued failure to re-register each August and/or non-engagement may result in a termination of registration.

## Student record and physical location

The Graduate School initiates and maintains postgraduate research student records through the University's student record system, SITS.

Some aspects of the SITS record are linked to background processes that determine local IT access. Therefore, any student who moves to a different University location or academic partner should notify the Graduate School so relevant records can be updated.

## Weekly hours

The nature of individual research work can vary widely, so specifying exact hours of work is difficult. However, research students should expect to study throughout the calendar year, with the amount of time spent by a full-time research student being similar to the amount of time expected of a full-time academic, i.e., on average at least 35 hours a week, with part-time students working an average of 17 hours a week.

## Holiday entitlement

The University recognises the importance of taking holiday for the health and wellbeing of all students. Research students, including those who hold a Tier 4/Student Route visa, are permitted annual leave during the published closure periods of their academic partner, centre or institute, i.e. Christmas, Easter, and Bank Holidays, as appropriate.

In addition, full-time students are permitted up to 25-days holiday in each calendar year, plus public and academic partner closure days. Students should not normally take more than 15 consecutive days leave at a time and leave should be agreed, in advance, through discussion with their Director of Studies.

Part-time students have no specific holiday entitlement as they are already fitting study time around other commitments. However, holidays should form part of the schedule negotiated with the Director of Studies, who should also be kept informed of any lengthy breaks.

All leave should be taken in line with university and academic partner expectations – e.g., not taking leave during key Graduate School and local training sessions, research events, seminars etc. For those students in receipt of Research Council or other external funding, due attention should be paid to the rules governing leave arrangements for those bodies.

## Tier 4/Student Route visa holders and attendance monitoring

Tier 4/Student Route holders are subject to monthly attendance checks throughout the duration of their studies, usually undertaken by their Director of Studies. If any request is made to study away from a UHI location before approval can be given the University must be satisfied that the request complies with the law regarding attendance requirements.

In situations where the student's overall attendance is poor or monitoring reports are submitted late, this may trigger warning letters, including final warning and termination letters, advising that that student's UKVI sponsorship may be withdrawn at the discretion of the University's Authorising Officer.

**IMPORTANT:** monthly monitoring must continue until completion, while a student holding a visa remains in the UK. 'Completion' in this context means a formal award has been made, after a viva and any necessary corrections have been confirmed and the award formally notified to the student by the Graduate School. Submitting a thesis for examination or submitting a corrected thesis after viva does not mean completion has been achieved.

## Unexpected absence

Students should ensure their Director of Studies, or another member of the supervisory team, are informed of any situation that results in unexpected absence.

A function to record absence is available in [PGR Manager](#). Whilst using this is optional, your academic partner PGR Co-ordinator and/or Director of Studies may wish to use this to formally record absence.

## Intellectual property rights (IPR)

IPR are automatically assigned to the University, but an application can be made to opt out of this default position. Students should seek guidance from their Director of Studies if clarity is needed on any aspect of such management or ownership.

Information [online](#) provides further details.

## Section 4 – Research degree timeframes & programme management

### Duration of study

There is a standard period of study time allowed for each of the research degrees offered by the University and all research students should aim to submit a thesis before the end of the standard registration period.

#### See Section 4: Extending registration

\*MPhil is available only as an exit award from PhD.

	Degree	Mode of Attendance	Standard Period	Maximum Period
<b>First registered from 2021-22</b>	PhD	Full-time	36 months	48 months
	PhD	Part-time	72 months	84 months
	MPhil*	Full-time	24 months	48 months
	MPhil*	Part-time	42 months	66 months
	Master's by Research (MRes)	Full-time	12 months	24 months
	Master's by Research (MRes)	Part-time	24 months	36 months
	Degree	Mode of Attendance	Standard Period	Maximum Period
	PhD	Full-time	36 months	60 months

<b>First registered before 2021-22</b>	PhD	Part-time	60 months	84 months
	MPhil*	Full-time	24 months	48 months
	MPhil*	Part-time	42 months	66 months
	Master's by Research (MRes)	Full-time	12 months	36 months
	Master's by Research (MRes)	Part-time	24 months	48 months

## Changes to registration

As a research student progresses with their studies, it is understood that situations may arise which require a change of study arrangements.

For any change to registration, in the first instance, students should discuss their circumstances with their Director of Studies as they will need to indicate their support when the application is submitted for Research Degrees Committee approval.

Funded research students should ensure they are aware of the terms and conditions of the funder and understand the potential impact of making changes to their original registration.

It is essential to ensure that an application to change any aspect of a research student's registration is made before the proposed change commences. This is particularly important in the case of suspensions and extensions, as retrospective applications are not normally considered.

The following information and procedures apply to Doctoral and Masters by Research (MRes) programmes. MRes students enrolled on a programme that incorporates taught module(s) are subject to the normal regulations and procedures associated with any mitigating circumstances relating to the module(s). Where a suspension or extension to the MRes programme is required, application should be made to the Graduate School as detailed below.

## Mode of study

**Apply through PGR Manager - go to My project > Candidature management > Start a new application > Change of Mode.**

Unless there are exceptional circumstances, it is not possible to change mode of study more than once in each direction, i.e. full-time to part-time and vice versa. If approved, the maximum

registration period and expected submission (end) date will be adjusted as necessary. Tier 4/Student Route holders may only study full-time on-campus.

Campus-based students who wish to change to distance mode will be required to outline how the requirements for this mode of study will be met and should contact [gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk) to progress this request.

**[See Section 2: Distance mode](#)**

## Programme

**Apply through PGR Manager - go to My project > Candidature management > Start a new application > Change of programme.**

If a current UHI research Master's student wishes to transfer to PhD, their standard period of registration on the new programme may be reduced on the basis of previous study, provided that it has not already contributed to an academic award.

- For full-time students, the total period of study shall not be reduced to less than 24 months
- For part-time students, the total period of study shall not be reduced to less than 36 months

The Director of Studies should be consulted in the first instance, as they will need to assess what academic equivalence, stage or standard has been reached, to determine the anticipated duration of registration on the new degree.

If the application is approved, the standard PhD probationary review process will take place within the first 3 months (FT) or 6 months (PT) of the new programme.

## Supervisory team

**The Director of Studies is required to make an application through PGR Manager - go to My Postgraduate Research Students and select the student's record. Select Candidature management > Start a new application > Change in supervisory team.**

Certain circumstances may require a change to the supervisory team originally agreed, e.g., if a member of the team has left the university, or the focus of the project had changed. The Academic Partner, in discussion and agreement with a suitable representative from the supervisory team, must arrange the change of supervision in sufficient time to affect a smooth handover.

There could also be circumstances in which a student wishes to make a change to the supervisory team. This may or may not be possible, depending on several factors including the rationale for change and the availability of suitable alternative supervisors. Any student in this position may approach – as appropriate - their Director of Studies, their Third-Party Adviser or the Graduate School to discuss the situation.

## Suspension of studies

**Apply through PGR Manager - go to My project > Candidature management > Start a new application > Suspension.**

Students may apply to suspend their studies normally for up to 12 months in a single application. The maximum amount of time that may be suspended is 24 months.

Applications must be accompanied by relevant evidence as required, e.g., medical certificate, and must be made as soon as possible and before commencing a period of suspension. Retrospective suspensions are not normally permitted. Also see below, 'Suspensions relating to illness'.

Periods of approved suspension do not count towards the student's period of study, and the expected end date will be amended accordingly.

During a suspension, students will not have access to any University resources, including email, Brightspace, library and other systems – access will be removed 30 days after the suspension start date.

Upon the student's return from suspension, a supervisory team meeting should be held as soon as possible to review the work plan and timetable.

If a student is in receipt of a studentship, stipend payments are not normally paid during periods of suspension, however the funders' terms and conditions will apply in this regard. Tuition fees are not normally payable during the period of suspension and full-time students may be liable for council tax.

There is a distinction between suspending studies and extending studies. A suspension can only be taken when a student is not engaged in work towards their degree. If a student continues to be engaged in work towards their degree, then a suspension will not be appropriate.

The following circumstances **are regarded** as grounds for applying for a suspension or extension of studies:

- Serious physical or mental illness of the student
- Death/serious illness of a partner, close family member or close friend
- Unforeseeable or unpreventable events such as distress or injury caused by a serious accident; the effects of being a victim of a criminal act or the distress or serious disruption caused by fire, flood or another natural catastrophe.
- Serious personal problems such as relationship problems, family crises
- Unexpected changes to the student's source of funding (NB: students must ensure that they have the necessary funds before embarking on their degree)
- Breakdown of *essential* equipment where a student is unable to continue research and the use of alternative equipment is not possible.
- Delays in obtaining ethical approval where approval has been sought in good time.
- Jury service; military service



- Maternity, paternity or adoption leave
- Delays in progress due to unforeseen problems with the degree programme and/or working environment e.g., moving of offices/buildings, supervisor(s) changes and unavailability etc., which are outside of the student's control. Note: any such issues must be reported to the Graduate School Office at the time it occurs
- Study leave, necessary for the degree programme, other than official leave of absence for study at an approved institution or fieldwork
- Internship/work placement necessary for the degree programme.

The following circumstances **will not normally be regarded** as grounds for applying for an extension or a suspension of studies:

- Circumstances encountered during supervised study, which should have been dealt with at the time
- The student or supervisor was unaware of policy and application procedures for suspensions and/or extensions for postgraduate degrees. It is ultimately the student's responsibility to ensure that they are aware of all policies and procedures relevant to their registration and degree
- Further primary research and/or laboratory work
- Long-term holidays/vacations
- Inadequate planning and time management
- Difficulties with English language, including delays because of proof reading
- Computer or other equipment failure or theft where use of an alternative is possible or any loss of work was avoidable, except where the work is lost through the failure of UHI systems as confirmed by the relevant UHI department
- Change in employment conditions: requests from part-time students who are working while studying may exceptionally be considered where a change in employment conditions was unforeseen. This will not normally be an acceptable reason for students in the submission pending or resubmission periods.

## Suspension and Tier 4/Student Route visa holders

The University is required to withdraw immigration sponsorship for Tier 4/Student Route visa holders during the suspension; therefore, students may be required to leave the UK and re-apply for a visa before returning.

## Suspensions relating to illness

The University takes its duty of care for postgraduate researchers very seriously and provides useful [health and wellbeing information and resources](#). Students are encouraged to reach out for support if they are struggling, rather than suffer in silence.

While supervision is often seen as mainly intellectual guidance, a Director of Studies and other members of the supervisory team have a responsibility to be supportive of students, and where

they are informed of any ongoing illness or other circumstances that affect a students' performance, they are better able to provide support.

A suspension of studies request cannot normally be made for a period of sickness less than 4 consecutive weeks and there is an expectation to make up any time lost during the remaining period of registration.

It is advisable to record such periods of absence on PGR Manager, to support any future application for an extension or a change in study mode, e.g., from full-time to part-time.

Students who experience several short blocks of illness, i.e. less than 4 weeks each, or are experiencing ongoing difficulties with attending on a long-term basis should seek welfare support and advice through their supervisors, Third Party Adviser, [local student support](#) or the Graduate School.

## Funded PhD students and periods of sick leave

Stipend payments are not normally paid during periods of suspension; however, the funders' terms and conditions will apply in this regard.

The University has agreed the principle that some funded PhD students may continue to receive their stipend payments as 'sick pay' during approved suspensions which are covered by medical certificates for up to 13 consecutive weeks within any 12-month period. Studentship stipend payments will normally be extended by the eligible commensurate period at the end of the student's standard registration period.

## Eligibility for receiving sick pay

PhD students who are registered with the University on a full-time or part-time basis and who are in receipt of a studentship that makes provision for annual stipend funding from the following sources are eligible to receive stipend payments, as noted in the previous section:

- a. Externally funded studentships, where the funder has made sick pay provision
- b. Students awarded a studentship which is funded in full by the University of the Highlands and Islands
- c. Students who are funded from external sources administered by the University *may be* eligible for some, or all, sick pay subject to the funders' terms and conditions.

In the case of short-term - normally considered to be up to approximately 4 weeks in duration- self-limiting illnesses, e.g., colds, stomach upsets, for which a suspension of studies has not been sought or taken stipend payments will continue to be paid throughout the period of illness.

Students who have less than 13 weeks funding remaining at the point sick leave and associated suspension commences will receive the stipend payment during sick leave commensurate with funded time remaining.

The following groups of students are not eligible for receipt of stipend payments under the above noted principle:

- Self-funded students
- Students who have submitted their thesis for examination or are within a resubmission period post- viva

- Students who receive an externally funded stipend directly from an external organisation – these students must follow the regulations of their funder. If the funder does not provide additional funds, the university is not liable to provide any payments. In such cases, students should seek advice from the Graduate School who may be able to direct them to hardship funds, where available
- Students in receipt of awards covering tuition fees only, and
- Students who have been in receipt of funding but who are – or will be – outside of their funded period at the point at which their period of sick leave would commence.

To be eligible for sick pay, a suspension of studies application must be submitted through PGR Manager as soon as possible and must be accompanied by appropriate supporting evidence.

Retrospective claims for sick pay will not normally be considered. However, this does not apply to the first 2 weeks of any longer-term period of illness on the grounds of ill health, in recognition of the uncertainty that can often accompany the early period of illness, which may also involve a period of necessary emergency activity, during which time it would not be appropriate or reasonable to expect a suspension application to be made.

When calculating an absence period (suspension), weekends and public holidays are counted as days of absence.

## Maternity, paternity and adoption

The normal suspension application procedure should be followed through PGR Manager, although maternity leave is calculated separately from a standard period of suspension of studies and the thesis submission deadline will be adjusted in line with the amount of any maternity leave taken.

Please refer to the detailed guidance for research students within the [UHI Student Pregnancy, Maternity, Paternity and Adoption Guidance](#).

## Extending Registration

It is expected that research students will submit their thesis by the end of the standard period of study.

### [See Section 4: Duration of Study](#)

Please note the following information regarding an automatic, additional 12-month registration period. No application is required however, as indicated below, there will be a requirement to apply for an extension if a thesis is not submitted at the end of this automatic time.

## PhD thesis pending – Applies only for PhD students first enrolled from 2021-22

If a PhD thesis has not been submitted for examination at the end of the standard period of registration, full-time and part-time **students will be automatically entered into a thesis pending period**, whereby a further 12 months is given to complete their thesis. Some UKRI-funded students may differ. [Fees apply](#)

During this time, the student will be entitled to continued access to library and computing facilities, but access to facilities for research may be limited and will be made available at the

discretion of the Academic Partner. Supervision guidance will also continue to be provided, albeit likely to be on a more limited basis.

An annual progress review must be submitted at the beginning of the thesis pending year, providing evidence of progress and including a thesis plan giving target dates for the completion of each chapter to support the feasibility of submitting the thesis by the end of the thesis pending period. Students are advised to plan for submission at six-months of the thesis pending period.

### Extension period – applies only for students first enrolled from 2021-22

If a thesis is not submitted for examination at the end of the **thesis pending period (PhD)** or at the end of the **standard period of registration (MRes)**, an application can be made for an extension of up to 12 months.

Go to **My project > Candidature management > Start a new application > Extension**.

No further period of extension will be permitted, and no extension will normally be approved that results in a thesis being submitted beyond the permitted maximum period of registration. **Fees apply.**

During this time, the student will be entitled to continued access to library and computing facilities, but not to facilities for research. Supervision guidance will also continue to be provided, albeit on a more limited basis.

An extension application must be accompanied by evidence of progress and include a thesis plan giving target dates for the completion of each chapter to support the feasibility of submitting the thesis within the extension period. This evidence should also be provided in the annual progress review, which should be submitted at the beginning of the extension period year.

Funded students should not assume any extension agreed will automatically mean an extension in funding is available.

### Continuation period – applies only for students first enrolled prior to 2021-22

If a thesis is not submitted for examination at the end of the **standard period of registration**, full-time and part-time **students will be automatically entered into a continuation period** of registration, whereby a further 12 months is given to complete their thesis. **Fees apply.**

During this time, the student will be entitled to continued access to library and computing facilities, but access to facilities for research may be limited and will be made available at the discretion of the Academic Partner. Supervision guidance will also continue to be provided, albeit likely to be on a more limited basis.

If a thesis has not been submitted for examination at the end of the **first continuation period**, exceptionally, a **final 12-month continuation period** may be granted.

Go to **My project > Candidature management > Start a new application > Extension**

No continuation period will normally be approved that results in a thesis being submitted beyond the permitted maximum periods of study. **Fees apply.**

An annual progress review must be submitted at the beginning of each continuation year, providing evidence of progress and including a thesis plan, giving target dates for the completion of each chapter to support the feasibility of submitting the thesis by the end of the period.

## Research Council funded students

It is the expectation of Research Councils that full-time PhD students funded by them should submit their thesis for examination within four years of starting their programme of research. Any cost relating to an extension fee will normally be met by the student and continued stipend payments cannot be assumed.

Students must comply with the requirement of their funding body with regards to the length of period of study and deadline for submission of thesis.

## Tier 4/Student Route visa holders

Tier 4 or Student Route visa holders should refer to - and abide by - the terms of their visa when considering extending their registration. **The Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) end date should be the target submission date**, as UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) considers this to be the programme end date - it is important to not use the visa end date as the submission date. The Graduate School can provide further clarification, if required.

## Early thesis submission

**Apply through PGR Manager - go to My project > Candidature management > Start a new application > Early Thesis Submission**

In normal circumstances, students are expected to submit their thesis after the completion of their standard period of study and before their maximum period of study.

### See section 4: Duration of study

In exceptional circumstances, and with the approval of Research Degrees Committee, a student may be permitted to submit their thesis before completing their standard period of study. Requests are normally only considered on academic grounds.

Funded students should be aware that stipend payments will normally stop once a thesis has been submitted and so the funders' terms and conditions should be consulted before an application is made.

## Withdrawal and termination

**Submit through PGR Manager - go to My project > Candidature management > Start a new application > Withdrawal.**

### Withdrawal initiated by the student

Students who are considering withdrawing from their research programme are advised to seek advice, either from their Director of Studies, another Supervisor, Third Party Adviser, or the Graduate School. Please also see information [here](#).

Once it has been agreed that withdrawal is the best option, students should submit a formal

notification of withdrawal through PGR Manager. The application must indicate the end date and withdrawals will not normally be applied retrospectively. The University reserves the right to dispute a date provided by the student.

### Termination initiated by the university

The termination of a student's registration may be an outcome of the remediation process, undertaken because of unsatisfactory progress through the progress review process. Continued failure to re-register each August and/or non-engagement may also result in a termination of registration.

The Director of Studies is responsible for notifying the Graduate School in cases of continued non-engagement. Where applicable, reasonable attempts to contact the student by email (personal and student account) and letter will be made by the Graduate School.

Following notification of non-engagement, a one-month deadline will be given by which time the student should have contacted the Graduate School – if no contact has been made by this deadline, Research Degree Committee reserves the right to terminate without further notice, after consultation with the Director of Studies.

Students may appeal their termination of registration through the University's [assessment appeals procedure](#).

### Tier 4/Student Route visa holders

Tier 4/Student Route visa holders must be aware that withdrawal may affect their immigration status, and they may be required to leave the country once they withdraw from their studies. If a student's registration ends, the University can no longer sponsor a student to remain in the UK and is legally bound to report the withdrawal to the Home Office.

## Section 5 – Monitoring student progress

### Progress review timetable

PhD and MRes programmes follow a progress review structure designed to support students through their research, aiding reflection on progress so far and planning for the following year. Progress is monitored through the submission of progress reviews, supported through the **Postgraduate Structured Management Framework (PSMF)**.

The timetable below shows the progress review timetable for each research degree programme. Review submission dates will be based on the student's start date.

There are two programme management structures – identified as 'new regs' and 'old regs', with differences relating to the period beyond the standard period of registration.

These modes are dependent on when the student first registered for their research degree i.e.

- **NEW REGS** = students enrolled from 2021/22 onwards
- **OLD REGS** = students enrolled prior to 2021/22.

**DOWNLOAD:** [Progress review timetable](#)

### Postgraduate Structured Management Framework (PSMF)

The PSMF has been developed to support research students and their supervisors by providing a framework for PhD and MRes programmes - full-time and part-time - that identifies expected yearly milestones and activities.

The framework is organised by the following five themes, and it is intended that academic areas modify the frameworks to suit their needs, while retaining a core element to ensure consistency of supervisory practice.

**1. Milestones** - the milestones represent significant steps common to most postgraduate degrees. The framework suggests a time scale for their expected delivery, although this will vary to some extent depending on the nature of the study and academic discipline.

**2. Activities to achieve milestones** - key activities necessary for achieving milestones are shown.

**3. Training and development** - participating in relevant training and development opportunities is an important aspect of completing a postgraduate degree; general student competencies and training requirements include the following:

Commercial appreciation of research	IPR, copyright, patent law
Computing skills	Use of spreadsheets, databases, statistical packages, data analysis software

Demonstrating/Teaching skills	To include training in the assessment of students
Information retrieval	Literature awareness, extracting information from databases, library work, information science/technology
Knowledge transfer and public engagement activities	Participation in conferences, outreach activities
Personal and financial skills	Team working, budget management, leadership, project and time management, problem solving
Presentation skills	Writing skills, writing of CV, thesis writing, poster making, seminar presentation, learning through teaching, mock interview.
Subject specific skills	To be identified by academic area
Good Research Practice and Ethics Training	See Section 12: Framework for good practice in research - Ethical practice in research

**4. Role of supervisory team** - regular meetings with the student and the supervisory team over the course of the degree are essential for ensuring that degree milestones are successfully achieved.

[See Section 6: Supervisory Meetings](#)

**5. Reviews and monitoring** – progress monitoring reviews.

[See Section 5: Progress Monitoring Reviews](#)

**Download:** Postgraduate Structured Management Framework.

## Progress monitoring reviews

**Submit through PGR Manager - go to My project > Progression review > Create a new application. The type of progress review due (see below) should be made available. It is the student's responsibility to start the progress review process.**

PhD and MRes student progress is formally reviewed until the thesis is submitted for examination.

Progress reviews should provide an overview of progress so far, with progress outcomes agreed by the supervisory team prior to submission of the review. The review process should:

- give the student formal practice in talking about their research to an audience that may include non-specialists.



- be a useful feedback exercise.
- identify problems or challenges early and help resolve, where possible
- serve as an opportunity for the student or supervisor(s) to raise any concerns and to ensure local resources and supervisory provisions are satisfactory.
- promote timely and successful completions.

A student's personal and professional development should form a component of the review. Identifying training and development needs will allow students and supervisors to tailor research training and enhance skills and competencies.

The reviews themselves are an important record of progress, and it is crucial that they are completed on time. Graduate School Committee will monitor late progress reviews and students who fail to submit their review when required may be reported to Research Degrees Committee for inadequate engagement. Continued non-submission may also result in the Director of Studies being deemed ineligible to supervise additional research students and they may be replaced in their role for existing students.

Progress reviews are read and acknowledged by the Head of the student's academic partner (or nominated senior academic within the academic partner). Once it is submitted the review may be considered by Graduate School Committee and feedback provided and/or (after consultation with the Director of Studies) re-assessment of the outcome required.

**Types of progress reviews** – See the Postgraduate Structured Management Framework for expected milestones and activities for each of the following:

- 3-month and 6-month progress review - provide prompts and guidance on early activities to assist with settling into life as a research student. The student and Director of Studies can submit their own, brief review on activities so far. No assessment outcomes are required to be recorded at these two stages of the progress monitoring process.
- PhD probationary progress review – all doctoral degree students are registered in the first instance for PhD studies; the probationary review process enables all parties to review progress and determine whether PhD registration can be confirmed. A thesis panel meeting is mandatory for all probationary reviews.
- Annual progress review – the completion of the annual review process is required until the thesis is submitted for examination. Whilst it is not mandatory for PhD students to undertake a thesis panel meeting for each annual review, it is strongly recommended.

### See Section 5: Thesis Panels

**Progress monitoring review outcomes** - At the end of the probationary and annual review process, the supervisors must recommend an outcome on the student's progress. The outcomes may be one of the following options:

- Progress satisfactory (for probationary, PhD registration is confirmed)  
- the progress review process for that year has been completed; the student continues with the progress review schedule for their degree.

- Progress satisfactory refinements required (for probationary, PhD registration is confirmed):
  - the Director of Studies should outline requirements in their progress review feedback; the intention is not for the progress review to be resubmitted, but to provide guidance on any improvements that need to be worked on in the year ahead
  - any work required should be managed and recorded within supervisory meetings and should be reflected upon and reported at the next review.
- Progress not satisfactory 3-month reappraisal required (for probationary, PhD registration is deferred):
  - a period of enhanced academic activity, whereby progress monitoring should be repeated, enabling the student to resubmit their progress review and, where applicable, for another thesis panel to be arranged.
  - the Director of Studies should provide detailed guidance, through their progress review feedback, as to what work is required to be undertaken or submitted during this 3-month period and should arrange to meet the student as soon as possible to ensure they understand what is required.
  - if another thesis panel meeting is to take place as part of this reappraisal, this should be scheduled before the end of the 3-months.

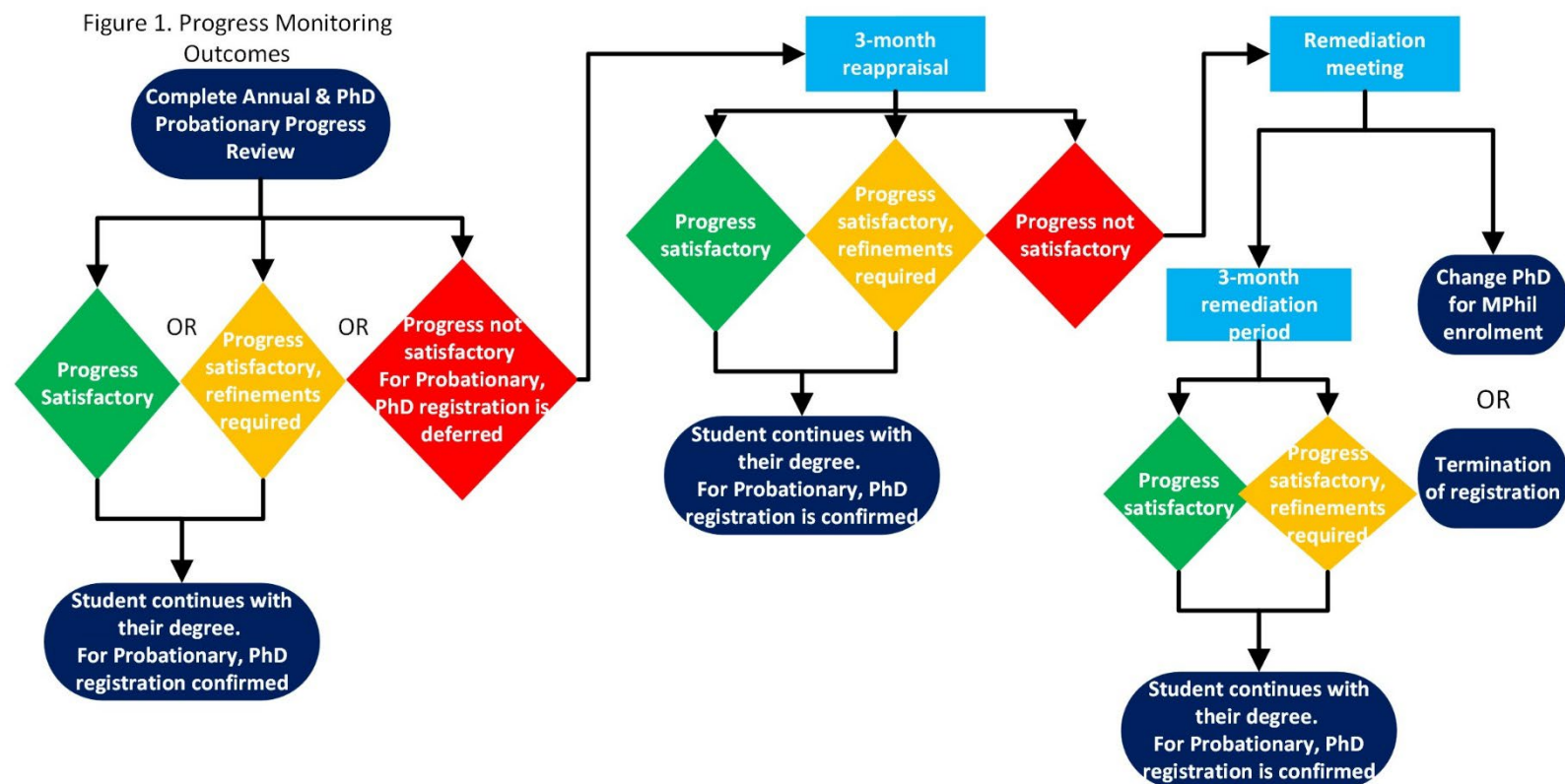
The reappraisal period will commence on the day the student is formally notified by Graduate School Committee of the outcome of their progress review. Only one reappraisal period is permitted.

At the end of the reappraisal period, the supervisors must decide if progress is satisfactory, or satisfactory with refinements – either outcome will result in the progress review process having been completed.

If progress is not satisfactory, the outcome will be recorded as not satisfactory, remediation required – this will initiate the formal process of remediation.

**See Section 5: Monitoring student progress - Remediation relating to unsatisfactory progress**

Figure 1. Progress Monitoring Outcomes



## Thesis panels

It is mandatory that a PhD probationary review includes a thesis panel meeting. It is also good practice to undergo an annual thesis panel meeting, so panel feedback can be considered when setting future aims and objectives - therefore building this activity into the annual review cycle is strongly recommended and should be agreed on an individual basis.

The Director of Studies, or nominee (who can be the student), is responsible for organising the thesis panel meeting.

MRes students are not required to undergo a thesis panel meeting. However, this may be a useful exercise when planning for their viva. If it is agreed that this is required, this does not have to be formally reported online through the progress monitoring process.

## Thesis panel submission

Prior to the panel meeting, and before submitting their progress review, the student should submit a separate piece of work, or a presentation, for consideration by the panel members.

The requirements and nature of the panel submission will depend on the discipline and the stage at which the thesis panel is being held, so the student should consult with their Director of Studies when starting to prepare their panel submission. Examples of what may be included are: a literature review (introduction), methods used, any data collected (results) and any other activities the student has undertaken or is due to undertake soon.

## Thesis panel purpose

- Provide the student with an opportunity to present aspects of their academic work and achievements for the period of the review.
- Highlight any problems experienced by either student or supervisor during the review period.
- Discuss the need for a 'Plan B' to be in place, if not already, in case aspect(s) don't go according to plan.
- Provide the panel with an opportunity to reflect on the student's progress and give constructive verbal and written feedback.
- Review and agree any training needs.
- Consider if existing ethical approval remains appropriate, or if a new ethics application needs to be submitted.
- Gauge the ability of the student to complete within the timescale – for students who, at the end of the year, are due to submit a thesis for examination, a decision should be made about the feasibility of a submission at this time. This should prompt a discussion about applying for an extension, how much extra time is required and the amount of supervision required during this additional time.

## Thesis panel membership and format

*As a minimum*, the panel should consist of the following:

- Director of Studies - it is not recommended that the Director of Studies acts as panel chair for their own student(s)
- At least one other member of the supervisory team - the preference being that all supervisors attend where possible.
- \*A research-active member of UHI academic staff - who may act as thesis panel chair.
- \*Early Career Researchers - may be invited to attend as a panel member. They can also take on the role of thesis panel chair, in which case they must be guided through the process with a more experienced colleague beforehand.
- External stakeholders/partners as appropriate, e.g., funders or creative mentors - note, external panel members cannot act as the panel chair.

\*not necessarily required to be aligned with the student's research area but should be independent from the supervisory team.

The student would normally be required to give a presentation to the panel (approximately 10-15 minutes), giving background to their topic, methods and future plans.

There should be the opportunity for students to speak with the panel without the supervisor(s) being present – and vice versa.

## Thesis panel feedback

The thesis panel chair, on behalf of the whole panel, should submit feedback through PGR Manager and although the panel's input does not constitute a formal assessment, it will contribute to the review process. The process is intended to be supportive of both student and supervisory team by providing constructive feedback.

## Remediation relation to unsatisfactory progress

### Challenges to academic progress

As part of the supervisory process, a research student can expect their supervisory team to draw their attention to any issues with academic progress at the earliest opportunity.

To help support students, it is important for supervisors to be open about any difficulties and outside of the formal progress review process, if any member of the supervisory team has concerns about a student's progress, they should inform the Director of Studies.

If necessary, these concerns should be raised at a supervisory meeting which all supervisors should attend, where possible. At this meeting, the student should be given feedback and clear guidance on areas that require improvement. Such issues – and the activity undertaken to remedy them – should be recorded in the student's PGR Manager supervisory meeting records and through the progress monitoring review process.

The remediation process should only be initiated where there are serious concerns about the academic progress of the student that have not been overcome, either through the progress monitoring reappraisal process, or through the formal supervisory meetings process. The reason(s) for recommending remediation may be:

- Not providing, or insufficient evidence of satisfactory progress on research
- Not presenting, or insufficient written work to an adequate standard
- Not presenting work to an agreed timescale
- Not maintaining regular contact with the supervisory team, e.g., by not attending supervisory meetings, whether in person or via electronic means.

The decision to recommend remediation should be agreed by all supervisors after consultation by the Director of Studies. If the process is being initiated out with the progress review process, the Director of Studies should, in the first instance, consult with the Graduate School and/or the local academic partner PGR Co-ordinator.

Regardless of how the recommendation to instigate remediation has been made (as an outcome of the progress monitoring process, or a stand-alone action) Graduate School Committee is required to approve the recommendation. This can be devolved to the Chair of the Graduate School Committee, or nominee(s) from the Committee. If the Chair decides that remediation is not required in this instance, the student and supervisory team will be informed and should continue to address issues through the supervisory meeting and progress review processes.

## Remediation Meeting

If remediation is supported by Graduate School Committee, the Graduate School will arrange – and clerk - a formal meeting, which should normally be attended by:

- Chair of Graduate School Committee, or Research Degrees Committee, or another suitable nominee
- Student
- Director of Studies
- Other supervisors
- The student may also invite their Third-Party Advisor or other person acting in a supportive capacity.

This aim of the meeting is to:

- Advise the student that they have not made satisfactory progress after (a) the stage 1 reappraisal period or (b) working through issues raised as part of the normal supervisory process
- Detail the reasons for concern
- Reassure the student that the meeting has been arranged to formally consider the reasons for concern and identify ways to address the concerns and support their future progress
- Give the student the opportunity to raise any mitigating circumstances
- Set clear, realistic and measurable targets for improving performance which allow the student to demonstrate satisfactory progress within an agreed timeframe
- Identify any training needs and support mechanisms and how these might be secured
- Explain the mechanism to assess whether the targets have been completed satisfactorily, within the timescale allowed
- Explain that continued unsatisfactory progress may lead to a recommendation for termination of research degree registration.

At the meeting, the student will have the opportunity to raise any further mitigating circumstances and to speak with the Chair without the supervisors being present. The supervisors will have the opportunity to speak with the Chair without the student being present.

## Outcomes of remediation meeting

One of the following may be recommended:

- **3-month Remediation period** (may be recommended on one occasion only)

- the meeting notes will record what is required to be done in the 3-month period, including any work that should be submitted to the Director of Studies and the deadline by which to do this

- these notes will constitute a formal warning, and funded students should be aware that external funders' terms and conditions may require the university to notify them if a formal warning is given.

- **Continue onto MPhil enrolment** (available only for students registered for PhD)

- the student's record will be changed to MPhil and the expected submission (end) date adjusted accordingly

- the Director of Studies should, as a matter of urgency, meet with the student to draft a new thesis timetable and plan. Ongoing progress will be monitored through the normal supervisory meeting process, and progress review process if appropriate.

- **Termination of the student's registration** with immediate effect

- the Graduate School will notify the student in writing and the supervisory team. The student's academic partner Head and PGR Co-ordinator will also be informed

- the Academic Partner leaving policy should be followed to ensure return of equipment, data, access and ID cards as appropriate. The student will no longer have access to UHI systems such as e-mail and library services.

## Outcomes following a 3-month remediation period

Where the student has undertaken a 3-month remediation period the Director of Studies, in consultation with the supervisory team, will recommend either that remediation has been satisfactory or that the student must continue onto MPhil enrolment or that registration should be terminated.

Where the outcome of the 3-month remediation period is satisfactory remediation, the student will continue with the progress review schedule for their degree, and the supervisory meetings process will continue to monitor progress. Where the outcome is continue onto MPhil enrolment or termination of registration, Research Degrees Committee are required to ratify the decision.

It should be noted that – at any stage of the reappraisal or remediation process, whilst academic progress may have been judged as satisfactory, this does not guarantee confirmation of PhD registration and/or that a degree will be awarded. To qualify for the award of a research degree, a student must meet the required learning outcomes for the degree and satisfy the examiners.

## Expectations of a student to attend the remediation meeting

It is expected that the student will attend the remediation meeting on the date and time arranged. Normally this will be face-to-face, however in some circumstances – e.g., when the student is not in the UK – the meeting may be held by videoconferencing. Staff not based locally who are invited to meetings may also attend by videoconferencing.

It is not mandatory for the student to attend a meeting. However, the student should be aware that if they do not attend (without good reason), they will forgo the opportunity to present their case directly to the attendees. Failure to attend the meeting will not prevent the instigation or conclusion of the remediation process.

Where the student is unable to attend for genuine reason, the Graduate School and the Director of Studies must be notified immediately and provide an explanation for their unavailability, with documentary evidence where appropriate. If it is agreed to postpone the meeting a new date will be given, although Graduate School Committee may choose to hold the meeting in the absence of the student unless the reasons for the absence – in the view of the Committee – are sufficiently compelling to warrant a further postponement. The absence or non-availability of a supporter (see ‘Advice and Support’ below) will not be accepted as good reason for any postponement

### Advice and support

The student may attend a meeting accompanied by a supporter, e.g., a friend or students’ association representative. Under this process the definition of friend excludes members of the legal profession engaged to act in their professional capacity. The supporter is not permitted to represent the student or to speak on their behalf and they cannot appear if the student is not present.

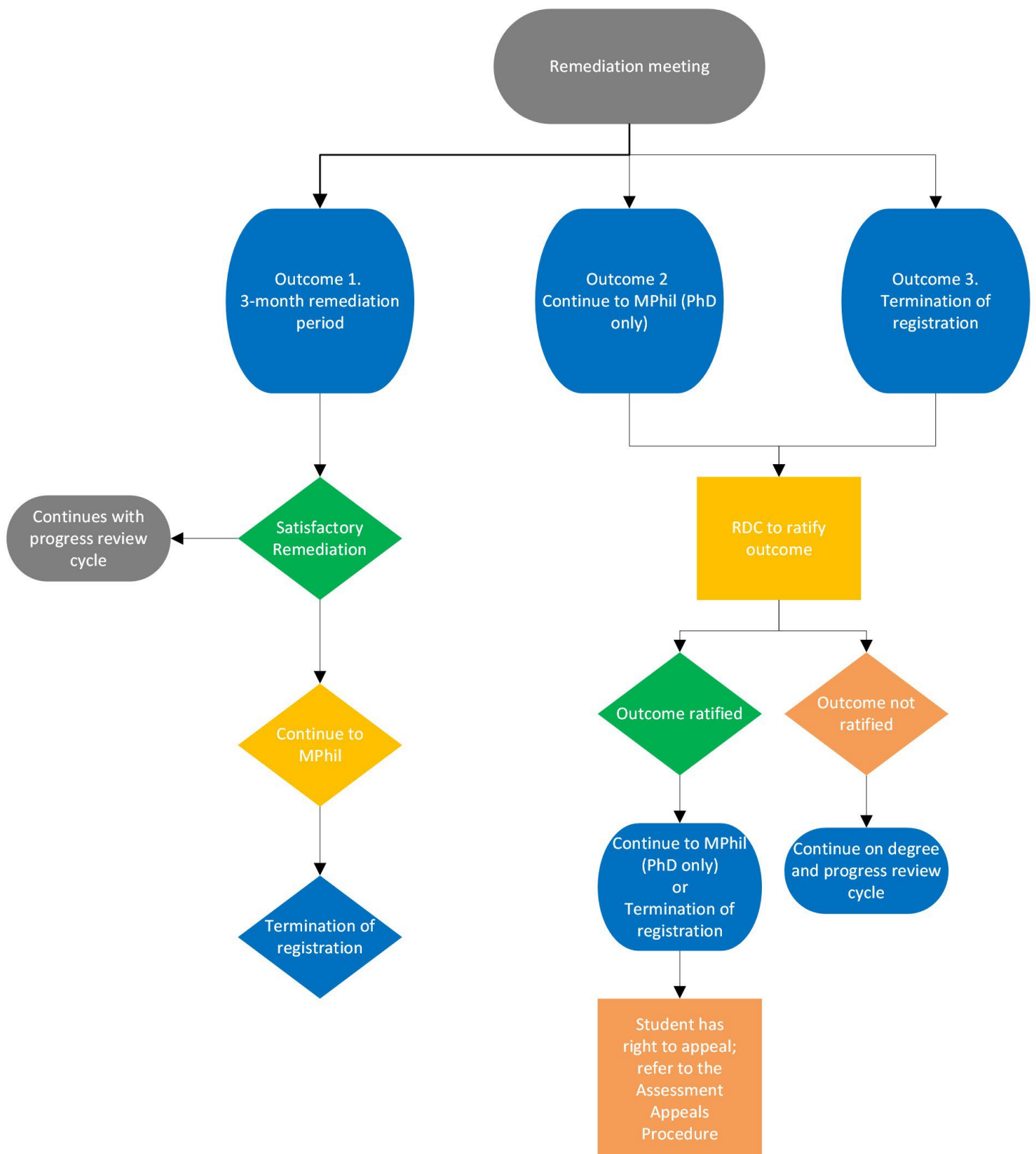
### Research student appeals procedure

At any point, the student would have the right to appeal Research Degree Committee's final decision. This is in line with the [Assessment Appeals Procedure](#).

**[See Section 13: Appeals and complaints](#)**



Figure 2. Remediation process flow diagram



## Section 6 – Supervision & responsibilities

### The supervisory team

Every supervision will be unique and personal in character and will be influenced by many factors, including the personalities involved and the environment in which the students and supervisors work. There will also be considerable variations in supervisory practice between disciplines – however, typically, a supervisor acts as a guide, mentor, source of information and facilitator to the student as they progress through a research project.

**UHI staff only** (log-in required): The Graduate School's [SharePoint site](#) provides resources to support supervisors, e.g., local induction and early meeting checklists (see Enrolment and Induction tab); maximum supervisory load guidance (see Application and Offers tab).

Each PhD and MRes student will have a supervisory team, comprising of at least two demonstrably active researchers, one of whom will be designated as the Director of Studies and will normally be a paid employee of the university.

All supervisory teams must include a Director of Studies, but it is the overall supervisory experience of the team which is the prime consideration. Colleagues can become Director of Studies if they have either supervised at least one Doctoral candidate through to completion; or they have supervised at least one Doctoral candidate through successful completion of their probationary year; or they have supervised at least one MRes candidate to successful completion.

Supervisory teams are also permitted to have a Director of Studies who has not supervised a doctoral candidate to successful completion, but in such cases the team must include at least one additional experienced PGR supervisor, that is, a colleague who has supervised at least one doctoral candidate to successful completion.

Furthermore, where the Director of Studies has not supervised at least one Doctoral candidate to completion, it will become mandatory to include on the Research Degree Application (RD1) Form:

1. their intention to undertake or the date of their last supervisor training organised through the Graduate School; and
2. details of the formal mentoring relationship that they have instigated through the UHI Learning and Teaching Academy with an experienced supervisor (that is, a mentor who has supervised a doctoral a doctoral candidate to successful completion).

One or two further supervisors will be on the team, depending on the scope of the project. There should be no more than 3 supervisors in each supervisory team unless there are exceptional circumstances for more being required. It is expected that at least two of the supervisors possess a PhD; RDC may waive this on an exceptional basis if the proposed supervisor has relevant experience and expertise and holds other relevant qualifications. In such cases, at least one other member of the supervisory team must hold a PhD and must provide direct supervisory support to the research student.

At least one supervisor should have knowledge, skills and experience around the student's project – if not, they must have knowledge, skills and experience in complementary area(s) directly related to the student's project.

## External supervisors

Academic staff of other Institutions, or staff from relevant external organisations may be appointed as members of supervisory teams to fulfil the above criteria but should not be appointed as the Director of Studies.

When liaising with external colleagues, the Director of Studies is responsible for making them aware of the [University's Privacy Notice for External Supervisors and Examiners](#).

## Supervision by persons who are married, in a civil partnership, partners or are immediate relatives

In cases where it is considered appropriate for a student to be co-supervised by academic staff who are married to each other or who are partners or who are closely related, it is important that all such relationships be declared as part of the application process. A research student should not have a supervisor and a Third Party Adviser who are related by marriage, civil partnership, blood/law or who are partners.

## Absence of supervisor

The academic partner must make arrangements for maintaining the supervision of research students whenever a supervisor is absent, and a change of supervisor application should be submitted.

[See Section 4: Changes to registration](#)

## Supervision meetings

Supervisors should maintain regular contact with their student, through supervision meetings and other forms of communication, and make every effort to offer reasonable accessibility so advice and support may be provided in a timely manner.

The amount of contact between a student and their supervisors will vary depending on the academic area, the mode of attendance (full-time or part-time) and on the stage of the student's research. However, it is expected that there should normally be, as a minimum, one formal, minuted supervisory meeting once a month (part-time study may require less frequent contact) with informal meetings held more frequently, as and when required.

Normally no more than 30 calendar days (full-time) or 60 calendar days (part-time) should elapse between meetings or contact. Contact could be by email, but this should not take the place of regular face-to-face or video conference meetings.

It is expected that, normally, a minimum of 9 (full-time) and 5 (part-time) formal meetings take place per annum, with at least one of these meetings including all supervisors.

[See section 6: Responsibilities of the supervisory team](#)

**Formal and informal supervision meetings** - A supervision meeting is any meeting between a research student and their supervisor(s), where the supervisor undertakes their stated responsibilities.

To count as a formal supervision meeting, it should:

- Be an individual meeting between the student and their supervisor(s) i.e., not a research/laboratory or other group meeting,
- Include substantial discussion of, and feedback on, research progress and plans but may additionally, or alternatively, focus on development and training needs.

There is no minimum duration for a formal supervision meeting, but it is unlikely that such a meeting would be less than 30 minutes and will normally be longer.

**Meeting schedule and record** - It is the student's responsibility to plan and organise meetings with their Director of Studies and to determine the format of formal meetings. There is no expectation that the meeting should be face to face and may be carried out remotely by video conference or telephone as appropriate.

It is a university requirement – and good practice – that records of formal supervisory meetings are maintained, and it is strongly recommended that the PGR Manager Supervisions Meetings function is used to record the nature of the discussion and any action points. The level of detail will vary, depending on the significance of the meeting, but students should go into the meetings with a clear idea of the discussion points to be raised.

## Responsibilities of the supervisory team

Supervisors are expected to assist research students throughout their period of supervised research and thereafter during a continuation, or thesis pending, or extension period (albeit guidance during these latter stages is likely to be on a more limited basis). They are not normally obliged to act as supervisors after this period except when a thesis has been examined and referred for resubmission, in which case the supervisor is obliged to provide advice until resubmission. The responsibilities of a supervisor are as follows:

### Admission (for prospective students)

- Advising the student on the choice of research topic in the light of what is appropriate for the degree and the present state of knowledge
- Advising on a topic which can be satisfactorily completed within the specified time and within the specified word limit.

### Quality assurance

- Familiarity with regulations governing research degrees
- Attendance at regular supervisor training courses
- Compliance with the requirements of the postgraduate structured management framework in relation to the training, supervision and monitoring of the research student

- Submission of timely progress reviews for consideration by Research Degrees Committee and to meet with the student where progress is deemed as 'not satisfactory' or 'satisfactory with refinements'
- Assurance that their workload is such as to allow adequate time to be given to supervised students
- Advising Research Degrees Committee of any lack of resources, which may prevent the student from completing their study within the period of study
- Advising on extensions or suspension of study as appropriate.
- Keep up to date with UHI and academic partner training regarding GDPR and confidentiality of information and adhere to UHI and academic partner regulations in this regard.

## Induction

- Give guidance about planning the research programme, about literature and sources, and about requisite skills
- Ensuring that the research student can become acquainted with all relevant safety regulations and procedures, and receives appropriate training and supervision when following any course of action or using any technique that might be deemed hazardous or dangerous
- Should direct students to appropriate sources of welfare advice where required, and if necessary, advise that the student contact the Academic Partner's Student Support Services
- Ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to the study environment if required
- Ensure that a student from overseas has the necessary linguistic and other skills to ensure effective use of their time and experience, and take steps to assist those in need of support to obtain appropriate help
- If not already done so, undertake the Ethics Reflection and Practice training module and thereafter provide information and guidance to students during their application for ethical approval
- Ensure that training needs are discussed within a month of admission (it may or may not be appropriate at this point for a training needs analysis to be completed).

## During the research degree programme

- Maintain regular contact through formal on-campus supervisory meetings, or by electronic means if the student is part-time, distance learning or not at a university location, e.g., on fieldwork
- Maintain reasonable accessibility so that advice may be offered during informal meetings, and arrange alternative support through another member of the supervisory team when away for protracted periods

- Explain best research practice and ethical considerations as early as possible in the student's studies
- Review written work and other outputs on a regular basis as appropriate
- Return such work with constructive criticism within a time period to be agreed with the student that does not impede the student's progress
- Work collaboratively with other supervisors when involved in a supervisory team
- Agree notes of formal meetings with the student
- Give detailed advice about completion dates and guidance on pacing of work - it is expected that students will normally submit their thesis within the standard period of registration
- Advise the student on other members of staff or experts in the field whom they might consult
- Arrange as appropriate for the student to present work at graduate seminars, staff seminars and conferences
- Advise on ethical issues relating to the conduct of the research, including how to obtain the approval of relevant ethics committees and consideration of the need for application to the [Protection of Vulnerable Groups \(PVG\) scheme](#), if appropriate
- Advise on honest and fair dealing with the work of others quoted or paraphrased in the written work of the student
- Consult with the student on the appropriate recognition of the student's contribution to research publications, considering current policy on Intellectual Property Rights and the Data Protection Act 2018, with reference to anonymity
- Ensure that the student has adequate opportunities to become aware of the standards required and the standards being attained
- Advise on whether and when a student should request a transfer to a higher degree e.g., MRes to PhD
- Advise whenever progress or standards of work are below what are generally expected and the implications of unsatisfactory progress.

## Skills training

- Determine what training in research methods, skills and further education in the subject are required by the student
- Undertake, with the student, a training needs analysis by the time of the probationary review and ideally annually thereafter throughout their prescribed period of study, to determine the student's research, transferable and generic skills requirements
- Ensure that the student has access to the required skills training and development opportunities and agree with the student a programme of skills training.

## Completion

- Advise on career and professional development
- Discuss CV-writing and job applications, and direct the student to skills training courses and careers service
- Try to ensure by advice and encouragement that the thesis is submitted within the specified time and within the specified word limit
- Receive and comment on the final draft of the thesis
- Offer advice and training as required for the viva
- Submit nominations for internal and external examiners to the Graduate School
- Aid in preparation for the viva, providing a mock viva if requested.

## Responsibilities of the research student

Research students will greatly benefit from the advice and direction of good supervisors but ultimately are responsible for their own research and their thesis. Students are required to submit to the for examination a thesis or equivalent body of work embodying the results of their research, before the end of their approved period of study. The responsibilities of a student are as follows:

## Registration

- Define the area of their research in consultation with their supervisory team
- Agree a research topic with their supervisory team as soon as practicable
- Maintain their enrolment status by registering at the start of their studies with UHI and continue to do so annually in August, even if studying away from a UHI location and/or are part-time
- Ensure that they have understood the guidelines on good research practice
- Ensure that training needs are discussed with their Director of Studies within a month of admission (it may or may not be appropriate at this point for a training needs analysis to be completed)
- Ensure that they are thoroughly acquainted with all relevant safety regulations and procedures and have received training before following any course of action or using any technique which might be deemed hazardous or dangerous
- Ensure that they have completed any training given at induction for example in relation to IT policies or GDPR policies.

## Progress monitoring

- Be familiar with the requirements of the Postgraduate Structured Management Framework and discuss these with their supervisory team as appropriate

- Ensure the submission of the required progress review process within stipulated timeframes
- If deemed as 'not satisfactory' regarding progress, enter a reappraisal period
- Raise issues and concerns in a timely manner with the supervisory team either directly or through the supervisory meeting process or the progress review process. If this is not appropriate, issues and concerns can be raised through the Third Party Adviser and thereafter, if necessary, the Graduate School
- Where research interests diverge substantially from what was originally intended, it might be appropriate to be allocated to a new supervisor. This should be discussed with the current Director of Studies, then the Graduate School if necessary.

### During the research degree process

- Agree a timetable for their research programme with their Director of Studies
- Prior to embarking on empirical work or fieldwork (data collection) seek approval from the Director of Studies and ensure compliance with relevant policies and procedures
- Maintain progress in accordance with the agreed timetable
- Agree a schedule of meetings with their supervisory team, write up notes of these meetings and agree them with their supervisors
- Keep a separate written record of their work in a research notebook/online file that can be reviewed, if required
- Discuss work and progress with their supervisory team
- Submit written work as and when required by their supervisory team
- Take the initiative with their supervisory team in defining and raising concerns or difficulties
- Agree with their supervisory team a plan and timetable for the writing of the thesis
- Refer to Brightspace and circulated training information and announcements regularly
- International students must maintain awareness of - and adhere to - the immigration rules, as failure to comply with rules will risk the visa status and may result in an adverse UK immigration record and the student being asked to leave the UK.

### Ethics

- Discuss the proposed research area with the Director of Studies and obtain timely ethical approval of the research by following UHI policy and processes
- Undertake the university's Ethics Reflection and Practice training module
- Consider and address appropriately, all ethical protocols and standards that apply in UK research, allied to their own discipline area of study, including consideration of the need for application to the [Protection of Vulnerable Groups \(PVG\) scheme](#), if appropriate



- Consult with their supervisor on the appropriate recognition of their contribution to research publications, considering current policy on Intellectual Property Rights and the Data Protection Act 2018, with reference to anonymity

## Skills training

- Define their training and educational needs and discuss them with their supervisory team, as part of personal development planning
- Undertake, with their supervisory team, a training needs analysis by the time of the probationary review and ideally annually thereafter throughout their prescribed period of study, to determine research, transferable and generic skills requirements
- Arrange as appropriate, in liaison with other students, opportunities to host research training events or seminars within their academic partner
- Attend the Graduate School annual student conference at least once throughout studies
- Attend courses as identified in the training needs analysis with the agreement of their Director of Studies and with reference to relevant UHI regulations.

## Completion

- Be aware that their thesis is their own work and responsibility
- Accept that, while their supervisory team will give advice, constructive feedback and other guidance, they must take ultimate responsibility for the final version of their thesis
- Decide whether to accept any advice or suggestions given by the supervisory team
- Decide when to give notice of intention to submit, taking due account of the Director of Studies' opinion
- Present the final draft of their thesis to their supervisory team
- Ensure timely submission of the thesis for examination
- Seek advice on preparation for the viva.

## Section 7 – Skills training & personal development

### Training resources

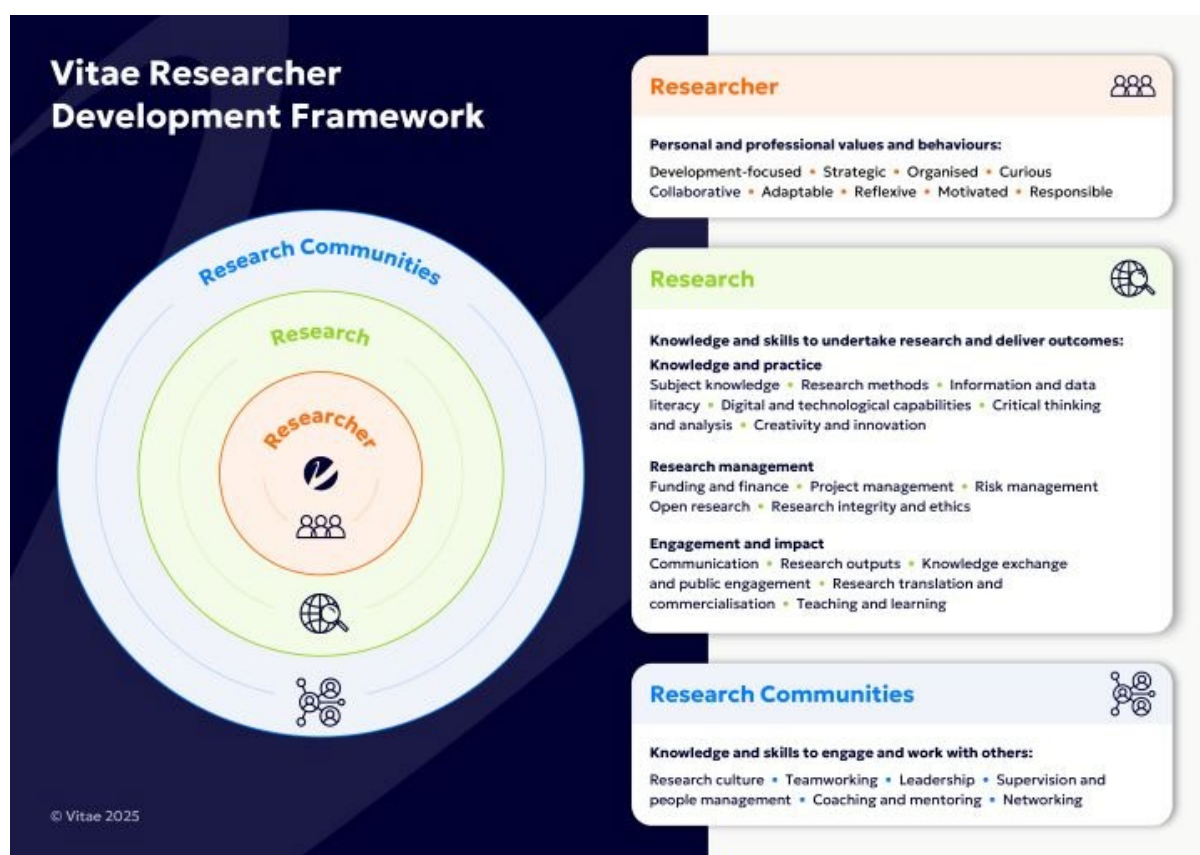
The university is an organisational member of [Vitae](#), the global leader in the professional development of researchers. Research students can gain access to the full range of Vitae resources by [registering](#) with their university student email address.

**Training Needs Analysis** - The development of transferable, employment-related and generic research skills is an important part of postgraduate research training. Supervisors may also require students to attend courses relating to their research, and this may be stipulated as a condition of entry or as part of their on-going skills development. Funded research may also have specific training requirements.

The Vitae Research Development Framework is a useful tool to use when undertaking a Training Needs Analysis (TNA) or skills audit, as it articulates the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of successful researchers.

It is structured into four domains which set out the wide-ranging knowledge, intellectual abilities, techniques and professional standards expected to undertake research, as well as the personal qualities, knowledge and skills to work with others and ensure the wider impact of research.

A TNA tool is available in PGR Manager - as part of their preparation for an up-coming progress review, students should consult with their Director of Studies and undertake a TNA. Any training needs identified should be reported in the progress review.



**University-wide training and external events** - a variety of training resources through UHI is available, including:

- an annual calendar of training arranged by the Graduate School - see 'Calendar' on PGR Manager
- On demand courses, videos and resources
- videos, covering a range of topics, e.g., Good Doctorate; Good Viva; Good Presentation - see Brightspace
- bookable online training, through the University of East Anglia - see Brightspace

A monthly email is sent to all PGRs outlining training opportunities available to them within and outside of UHI.

Training may also be available through the academic partner and students should ensure they are linked into local information networks.

Students can also attend external training and summer school events through UHI's membership of the following organisations:

**Marine Science subjects:**

Marine Alliance for Science and Technology for Scotland: [www.masts.ac.uk](http://www.masts.ac.uk)

**Arts, Humanities and Social Science subjects:**

Scottish Graduate School for Arts & Humanities: [www.sgsah.ac.uk](http://www.sgsah.ac.uk)

Scottish Graduate School for Social Sciences: [www.sgsss.ac.uk](http://www.sgsss.ac.uk)

**UHI research conference and training fund** - Enrolled PhD and MRes students (full-time and part-time) may be eligible to apply for financial support to attend external conference or training events through the Graduate School Office research conference and training fund. Details on eligibility, exclusions and how to apply can be found in the Travel/Conference & Hardship section of Brightspace.

**Some funded students may have additional funds available to them** - see Travel/Conference & Hardship section of Brightspace.

E-mail

If travel insurance is required to attend an event, students should follow their local academic partner processes. EO-registered students should, in the first instance, contact [gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk).

## Research Clusters

Several research clusters operate across the university. The purpose of the clusters is for researchers to come together to share research outputs and findings, engage in professional development relevant to research in various disciplines and to nurture interdisciplinary activities.

The exact programme of activities varies across the clusters but typically involves a seminar series and/or one-off events or conferences.

Engaging with clusters is strongly encouraged and students can be on more than one mailing list – to receive notifications on the relevant cluster activities, contact the relevant administrative officer:

- **Humanities and Arts Research Cluster (HARC)** - Conveners: Prof Colin Richards and Dr Lesley Mickel. Administrator: Pàdraig Moireach - [pm.smo@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:pm.smo@uhi.ac.uk)
- **Society, Identity and Knowledge (SILK)** - Conveners: Prof Vicky Johnson and Dr Rosalind Bryce. Administrator: Pàdraig Moireach - [pm.smo@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:pm.smo@uhi.ac.uk)
- **Marine, Environmental Science and Engineering (MESE)** - Convener: Prof Ben Wilson. Administrator: Alan Kerr - [Alan.kerr@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:Alan.kerr@uhi.ac.uk)
- **Institute of Health Research and Innovation** - Convener: TBC. Administrator: [biomedical.sciences@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:biomedical.sciences@uhi.ac.uk)

## Working while studying

There may be different conditions and restrictions on the work that a research student may undertake, dependent on several factors, e.g., whether studying full-time, studying on a Tier 4/Student Route visa, or undertaking teaching-related work. Students in receipt of a studentship should check the funders' terms and conditions and, if required, obtain permission from the funding body before committing to part-time work.

A National Insurance (NI) number records an individual's National Insurance contributions and tax payments. A National Insurance number should be applied for when starting work - [contact the National Insurance number application line](#).

## Full-time study

Students seeking part-time work opportunities are reminded that good self-management is required to ensure research commitments are met and a good work-life balance is maintained. During their studies, it is recommended that full-time research students should not work more than 20 hours per week - this includes any voluntary work and paid work for teaching they may be undertaking at their home location – see Doctoral students who teach.

## Tier 4/Student Route holders

Tier 4/Student Route holders studying at degree level or above are permitted to work 20 hours per week in any given week during their programme of study, and full-time during their agreed vacation periods. Tier 4/Student Route holders can only work on a temporary basis and cannot be employed on a permanent contract, nor can they be self-employed, set-up a business or engage in business activity.

Tier 4/Student Route holders who have submitted their thesis and are waiting for their viva must not work more than 20 hours per week. Please see [Home Office guidance](#) for further information.

**IMPORTANT:** visa holders must comply with the UKVI rules until they have completed. 'Completion' in this context means a formal award has been made, after a viva and any necessary corrections have been confirmed and the award formally notified to the student by the Graduate School. Submitting a thesis for examination or submitting a corrected thesis after viva does not mean completion has been achieved.

## Part-time study

While students studying part-time are not restricted in the hours they can work, the extent to which they manage their work and research timetable should be considered and reviewed regularly as part of the supervisor meeting activity.

## Doctoral students who teach

The University has endorsed the principles stated in the [QAA Scotland Expectations for Postgraduates Who Teach](#) and will seek to ensure these are followed.

PhD students may have the opportunity to be involved in the teaching responsibilities of their academic partner and, in accordance with national guidelines, no more than six hours per week should be undertaken as teaching – this should include time for any necessary preparation.

Any paid teaching or assessment work should be agreed in consultation with the Director of Studies and whilst it is not expected that they would prevent their student from teaching, they do retain the right to raise concerns with the student and/or Graduate School if they feel the requested or allocated teaching load may jeopardise their progress. Teaching and marking responsibilities should not endanger the prospect of completion within the time set by the university and any funding agencies.

It is expected that students contracted for teaching duties should normally be paid the appropriate standard hourly rate and students are advised to liaise with their Director of Studies to ensure that a contract is put in place in advance of undertaking such duties.

It is a requirement that students undergo an appropriate form of training prior to engagement in any formal teaching activity. The student and Director of Studies should consult PGR Manager 'Calendar' for the next available teaching training session or identify relevant training opportunities locally within the academic partner or through the UHIs Learning and Teaching Academy.

ALPINE is coordinated through the University's Learning and Teaching Academy and is open to those who deliver, support or lead the development of HE-level learning and teaching.

Visit the UHI [Learning and Teaching Academy](#) for further information about their work, including ALPINE.

## Scope of teaching and assessment duties

Doctoral students can:

- Routinely give tutorials and seminars
- Assist in lab/practical demonstration classes
- Give occasional guest lectures
- Provide input or guidance to undergraduate group projects in their own area

- As part of their educational development, e.g., as early-career researchers they may be mentored and undertake shadow-marking exercises.

Doctoral students should not:

- Operate as Personal Academic Tutor, Programme Leader or Module Leader (unless they are a part-time student and are engaged in an existing and relevant academic role before they commenced their PhD studies)
- Be responsible for regularly setting tutorial topics
- Develop essay questions
- Be routinely expected to put in more time preparing for a tutorial than they are paid for
- Co-ordinate, convene or teach modules independently at any level
- Mark coursework and exams above SCQF Level 9. Marking for summative assessment will always be subject to normal second marking arrangements.

## Section 8 – The research thesis

### General guidance on writing the thesis

Students are examined on their thesis and their ability to defend it under examination, and while the thesis can be seen as the culmination of the research, it is important that writing it is not left to the end. Students should produce draft chapters and sections throughout their studies and supervisors should advise students on the most suitable approaches.

In addition to advice from supervisory teams, students should read other UK thesis in their area – these are available through the [British Library's Electronic Theses Online Service \(EThOS\)](#).

The thesis is expected to form a coherent whole, with a consistent argument or series of arguments running through it (or discipline specific equivalent).

The incorporation of material published by the student during the period of registration for the degree is permitted, but it must be accompanied by written commentary on publications submitted. Furthermore, the footnoting/end-noting must make clear which sections of the thesis are based on published material and how much individual responsibility the student has for any jointly authored work. Such material must be properly and stylistically incorporated into the thesis.

It is important to use the University-approved referencing style when constructing your thesis. See more information [here](#) - also see the [Cite Them Right learn how to reference anything tutorial](#)

Listed below are the issues most identified by examiners when reviewing a research degree thesis, please consider these when writing your thesis -

- Presentation: lack of proof reading; spelling mistakes, grammatical errors, mislabelling figures
- Referencing: inaccuracies, missing references, inconsistencies, poor bibliographies
- Clearer methodological approach required
- Poor structure: repetition; overly long; requiring better editing
- Lack of focus aims, objectives, conclusions not fully developed
- Lack of data (quantitative/qualitative) or data analysis
- Poor use of English language.

### Incorporating creative work into a thesis

Where appropriate for the field of study, a programme of research may be undertaken in which the student's own creative work forms – as a point of origin or reference - a significant part of the intellectual enquiry. Such creative work must be undertaken as part of the registered research programme and in such cases, the presentation and submission may be partly in other than written form.

The proposed submission, including special arrangements for assessing non-traditional forms of material e.g., by public exhibition, performance or other demonstration, must be approved by the Research Degrees Committee as part of the application for registration. Additionally, the form of the creative works and the balance between the creative and analytical written components should be negotiated at the outset of application between the proposed Director of Studies and student.

Thesis submissions which include original, creative, practical work in part fulfilment of the award requirements are subject to the same assessment criteria as traditional submissions. As such, regard should be paid to the criteria for the award of the degree.

See Section 10: Criteria for the award of the degree

The creative work must be presented in relation to the argument of a written thesis and set within its relevant theoretical, historical, critical or design context.

The thesis must be accompanied by some permanent record of the creative work and ideally should be included in a digital submission, or if a printed copy is provided to the student's academic partner or funder, be bound with the thesis. Examples of a permanent record include, but are not limited to, DVD, video, photographic record, musical score or diagrammatic representation.

It is recognised that in some cases documentation of an exhibition or live performance event at the time of the viva will be submitted in an appendix as a condition of the award.

## **Incorporating publications into a thesis**

Incorporating publications into a thesis should not be confused with a PhD by Prior Publication, aka PhD by Portfolio or PhD by Published Work, which refer to a body of research published prior to enrolling on a research degree - this is an option not currently available at UHI.

Students who are enrolled on a programme of doctoral study may wish to present a portion of their thesis using published work in place of a standard format chapter or chapters. Only material produced by the student during their period of research degree registration may be incorporated into the thesis.

The inclusion of journal articles is permissible for other postgraduate research degrees which are exit routes for the PhD, i.e., MPhil.

Thesis submissions which include publications in part fulfilment of the award requirements are subject to the same assessment criteria as traditional submissions. As such, regard should be paid to the criteria for the award of the degree.

**See Section 10: Criteria for the award of the degree**

Students who wish to include publications in their thesis should with consult their Director of Studies at an early stage, to determine whether the proposed format is appropriate to their research and discipline area. If there is any doubt about whether an alternative thesis format is appropriate, it is strongly recommended that the thesis is presented in a standard format.



Any delays or complications arising because of the student's decision to use an alternative thesis format – or arising because of reverting to a standard format - will not constitute grounds for suspension, extension or appeal.

**What can be included** - Acceptable publication types include journal articles, book chapters and books. Materials must have been published, or accepted for publication and submitted to high quality, reputable, peer reviewed outlets. Students should seek guidance from their Director of Studies on suitable outlets prior to submitting materials for publication.

The quality of the publications must be of the appropriate doctoral level standard, consistent with the requirements associated with the degree award.

Normally, the student will be the primary author of most of the papers submitted. Each paper that is incorporated into the thesis must be accompanied by a corresponding declaration which states the student's specific contribution. Jointly authored material must be accompanied by a declaration from each co-author giving their permission for the paper to appear in the thesis.

It is the student's responsibility to obtain permission from the appropriate rights-holder to present published material in their thesis. Advice should be sought in relation to copyright implications, and the Director of Studies may be able to offer advice in this regard.

**Format of the thesis when incorporating publications** - The thesis must form a coherent body of interrelated work that shows an ability for critical analysis. For a thesis including publications, the result must present a similar body of work to that expected in a standard format.

***It is not acceptable to integrate a published article in its original published format into the thesis.*** Published material must be re-formatted in accordance with the presentation of thesis guidelines.

### **[See Section 8: Presentation of thesis](#)**

Each paper must be called a chapter and have an introductory section that explains how it links to preceding and following chapters. The publication(s) must provide a logical sequence of arguments that can be incorporated into an integrated whole - the thesis must not simply comprise a series of unconnected papers and chapters.

There must be conventional 'introduction' and 'conclusion' chapters that explains and justifies the rationale for the approach taken and integrates the strands presented in the earlier chapters/papers.

At the discretion of the student and their Director of Studies, appropriate written chapters on areas insufficiently covered by the publications – e.g., a more extensive review of literature of methods chapter – may also be included to provide necessary depth and coherence.

It is also at the discretion of the student and their Director of Studies – guided by practice within the academic discipline – to determine the appropriate number of publications to include in the thesis.

Pagination of published material must be revised to ensure consistency throughout the thesis.

Responsibility for the quality of the submitted thesis lies with the student; the examiners will assess the standard and appropriateness of papers and publications included within a thesis to determine that discipline specific standards are met. It should be noted that whilst peer

reviewing of publications can be seen as a good measure of progress, it does not guarantee success at examination.

## Word count and language

The constituent parts of a thesis – and what is generally included in the word count – is broadly the same across all disciplines. However, there are variations, e.g., the academic norm is for appendices to be included in the word count for Science and Medical Science subjects, but not in Humanities. Similarly, footnotes are often used in Humanities subjects, but not in Science.

The Director of Studies should offer guidance on the subject-specific requirements for their discipline; however, the following can be used as a general guide:

- **Included** in the word count: Main text (including introduction), footnotes, references, tables, captions, graphs and diagrams.
- **Not included** in the word count: Abstract, acknowledgements, bibliography, table of contents and appendices (including tables, graphs and diagrams *within* the appendices).

The figures below are an approximate guide to **maximum** lengths, and you should undertake a final word count check before submitting a thesis for examination. All theses must be submitted in English unless a research degree in Gaelic is being undertaken and this was indicated at the point of initial application.

If a thesis word count is 10% above the maximum word limit, students must apply to Research Degrees Committee - in the first instance the Graduate School should be contacted. Unless approval to exceed the prescribed limit has been obtained, a thesis cannot be sent for examination.

### Thesis submitted in English – maximum word limit.

- PhD - 100,000 words.
- MPhil - 70,000 words (exit award from PhD).
- MSc by Research, MLitt, MRes - 40,000 words. MRes with taught component of at least 20 credits – normally 30,000 words.

### Thesis submitted in Gaelic – maximum word limit.

Theses submitted in Gaelic automatically have a 20% increase on standard word limits (as outlined below) due to the nature of the Gaelic language.

- PhD - 120,000 words.
- MPhil - 84,000 words (exit award from PhD).
- MSc by Research, MLitt, MRes - 48,000 words; MRes with taught component of at least 20 credits – normally 36,000 words.

### Thesis including creative work.

Where the thesis is accompanied by creative work **the critical writing element of the thesis** should normally be no more than:

- PhD - English: 40,000 words. Gaelic: 48,000 words.
- MPhil (exit award from PhD) – English: 20,000 words. Gaelic: 24,000 words.
- MSc by Research, MLitt, MRes with or without taught component – English: 12,000 words. Gaelic: 14,500 words.

## Presentation of thesis

### Covid-19 Impact Statement

The University recognises that the COVID-19 pandemic has directly or indirectly impacted the work of many of our postgraduate research students. We encourage those students who wish to make their examiners aware of the impact COVID-19 has had on their research plans and thesis to prepare an impact statement for consideration during the examination process.

The impact statement should include the following information:

- Details on how disruption caused by COVID-19 has impacted the research e.g, an inability to collect/analyse data because of travel restrictions/restricted access to labs/additional caring and health responsibilities - 500 words maximum,
- A description of how the planned work would have fitted within the trajectory of the thesis e.g., through method development, development of analytical skills or advancement of hypotheses - 500 words maximum,
- A summary of any decisions/actions taken to mitigate for any work or data collection/analyses that were prevented by COVID-19 - 500 words maximum.

The inclusion of a COVID-19 impact statement is not compulsory and should only be used where the student wishes to highlight the impact of the pandemic and the changes made to their research as a result. Students are encouraged to discuss the statement with their Director of Studies before including it within the thesis presented for examination.

Examiners will be asked to take the statement into account when assessing the thesis and at viva, albeit without compromising standards as set out in the University's Postgraduate research degree regulations (Section 14b) and the QAA's Characteristics Statements for Doctoral and Masters Degrees.

### Thesis format

The following rules apply to the required format of thesis submissions for all research degrees -

The thesis must be presented in the following format:

- be in A4 format (unless approved by RDC in advance)
- be in a permanent, legible typescript or print. The recommended font is Times New Roman, or Arial and the recommended text font-size is 12-point.

- be printed double-sided (single side is an option, if preferred) on good quality, reasonably sourced white paper and within the range 70 g/m<sup>2</sup> to 100 g/m<sup>2</sup>
- have a margin of at least 40mm at the left-hand binding edge of the page. All other margins must be at least 15 mm.
- use double or one-and-a-half line spacing for the main text. For indented quotations and footnotes, you may use single spacing.
- have pages numbered consecutively throughout the main text, including any whole-page diagrams or illustrations.
- include a title page specifying:
  - full title of the thesis
  - full name of the author (the student) - please CAPITALISE the Surname/Family name
  - statement that the thesis is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the university for the appropriate award - e.g. *This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of the Highlands and Islands for the degree of xxx*
  - (if any) the name of any formally approved collaborating establishments or funding bodies - e.g. *This research programme was carried out in collaboration with xxx / funded by xxx / funded as part of the xxx programme.*
  - *For UHI award:* the month and year of submission
  - *For Aberdeen award:* the year of submission
- Incorporate an abstract of around 300 words stating the nature and scope of the work undertaken and contribution made to knowledge of the subject.
- a contents page.
- a statement of objectives (this can be part of the introduction, if preferred)
- a reference list or bibliography
- not contain any material that has been previously submitted for an award at an institute of Higher Education either in the UK or overseas – this must be confirmed through the student's completion of: *Submission of Thesis for Examination Form*
- acknowledge if there is any published material from the thesis in advance of examination or where you are submitting publications or other materials as part of a thesis submission. In such cases, copies of the published material should either be bound in with the thesis or may be placed in a pocket at the end.
- it is customary to include acknowledgments to individuals and organisations that have assisted the student's research, including the Director of Studies and/or Supervisory Team.

The thesis should be organised in the following format – should it be agreed that a COVID-19 impact statement be included, it should appear after the Abstract and before the main text of the thesis:

- Title page
- Abstract (approximately 300 words, on a separate page)
- List of contents
- List of tables, illustrations, etc
- List of accompanying material (if any)
- Preface (if appropriate)
- Acknowledgements
- Author's signed declaration (suggested wording: *I declare that all the material contained in this thesis is my own work.*)
- Definitions
- Text of the thesis, divided into chapters, sections, etc.
- Appendices
- Glossary
- List of references
- Bibliography

### Binding for final hard copy (where required)

- the binding must be of a fixed, permanent type so that pages cannot be removed or replaced.
- the front and rear boards must be strong enough to support the weight of the work when standing upright.
- the outside boards and spine should be sober in colour – black, dark green, maroon or navy.
- the outside front board must have the following information, in gold lettering, in at least 24-point type: the title of the thesis; the name (Surname/Family name and initials) of the author; the award (PhD, MPhil, MSc by Research, MLitt, MRes).
- the year of the final submission.
- The spine of the work must show, reading downwards: the student's name; the award (PhD, MPhil, MSc by Research, MLitt, MRes) the year of submission or resubmission.

**See section 9: Submission of the final thesis**

## Section 9 – Thesis submission

### Intention to submit

**This process will be available online through PGR Manager by 2026. Until notified, it remains a Word-based submission with the form available in Brightspace, to be sent by email to [gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk)**

An Intention to Submit form should be submitted to the Graduate School at least two months before the intended submission date. This alerts the team of the need to check that a suitable examination panel is in place for examination. If this is not submitted there may be a delay in the thesis being sent for examination whilst examiners are appointed.

Whilst the submission of the thesis for examination shall be at the sole discretion of the student, it would be unwise to submit the thesis for examination against the advice of the supervisors. Equally, students should not assume that a Director of Studies' agreement to the submission of a thesis guarantees the award.

If the submission deadline falls on a Saturday or Sunday or Bank Holiday, or during the Christmas closure period, submission will be accepted on the next working day after the deadline.

The use of plagiarism software is optional; however, it is considered best practice and is a helpful tool to check for inadvertent plagiarism, which can then be addressed before formal submission. Students should discuss this with their Director of Studies to determine if this should be undertaken locally.

### Failure to submit for students first enrolled from 2021-2022

Where a thesis pending period and/or the maximum period of extension has been taken and a thesis for examination has not been submitted, the student will normally be automatically de-registered.

In such cases, normally no more than one application may be made to register for a minimum of 12-months full-time or 24 months part-time, to submit the thesis for examination - in the first instance, contact [gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk)

The standard full-time or part-time [tuition fee](#) will apply.

### For students first enrolled prior to 2021-2022

Where a student submits a thesis for examination without an approved continuation period, or is beyond their maximum period of study, a [reinstatement fee](#) is charged.

### Submission for examination

**Thesis submission will be available online through PGR Manager by 2026. Until notified, the manual processes should be followed and the thesis should be sent by [UHI drop-box](#) or by email as a compressed zip file to [gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk). No additions or amendments**

**may be made – or copies retrieved – after the thesis for examination has been submitted.**

The thesis should be a PDF file, saved as PDF/A compliant - this is needed to ensure the long-term digital preservation of the thesis. When saving, select "Save As" then "More Options" and then "PDF/A".

If the thesis is composed of multiple files - such as an MS Word document and an accompanying MS Excel spreadsheet – these must be converted to PDF files and merged to create a single PDF file.

The thesis title should follow this format: year\_lastname\_initials\_degree.pdf. For example: 2014\_SMITH\_TL\_PhD.pdf **or** 2014\_SMITH\_TL\_MRES.pdf

#### What to submit

- A non-editable pdf copy of the thesis for examination, saved as PDF/A
- \*Submission of Thesis for Examination Form - available from Brightspace

***\*This form contains formal declarations and should be read carefully.***

**Additional materials for examination** - Students may submit an electronic copy of additional materials in support of – but not integral to – the examination of the thesis. Such materials might be survey data, experimental data, visualisations, etc. The file will be passed to the examiners, but they will not be obliged to use it in the examining process.

Any additional materials should be submitted at the same time as the thesis, but as a separate non-editable pdf, labelled AddMat\_lastname\_initials\_degree.

For example: AddMat\_SMITH\_TL\_PhD

If an embargo is required and has not already been agreed, an application to Research Degrees Committee must be made as soon as possible, and before the thesis is submitted for examination.

**See Section 9: Thesis embargo**

## Submission of corrected thesis

**Corrected thesis submission will be available online through PGR Manager by 2026. Until notified, the thesis should be sent by UHI drop-box or email as a compressed zip file to [gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk). No additions or amendments may be made – or copies retrieved – after the corrected thesis has been submitted.**

Where corrections to the thesis are required, the examiners will provide details of the required corrections, either by submitting a list and/or annotated copy of the thesis.

If there are any queries when correcting the thesis, the student should consult *only* with their Director of Studies and not be in contact with the examiners during this time. The Director of Studies may contact the examiners for points of clarification only

**Please note UHI Regulation 14b.41: Students who fail to make the necessary corrections, or to re-submit their thesis, within the stated deadline will not normally be permitted to submit after that date and will be withdrawn.**

It is therefore very important that students consult with Director of Studies during this process, if they require any clarification about the required corrections.

### What to submit

- A non-editable pdf copy of the corrected thesis.
- A document outlining how you have addressed the examiners concerns, or tracked changes shown on the thesis.

## Submission of final thesis

**Submission of the final thesis will be available online through PGR Manager by 2026. Until notified, the thesis should be sent by [UHI drop-box](#) or email as a compressed zip file to [gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk). No additions or corrections may be made – or copies retrieved – after the final thesis has been submitted.**

**The final version of the thesis must reflect any corrections required – and approved – by the examiners and should be submitted only after the student has been notified by the UHI Graduate School that the examiners' recommendation of award has been agreed.**

A printed, hardbound copy is not required by the University at this final stage; however, the academic partner may wish to receive a printed copy for holding in their library and make it available to readers on request as a reference document. A funder may also require a printed hardbound copy as part of their terms and conditions.

If this is the case, the Director of Studies or academic partner PGR Co-ordinator, should liaise with the student direct, including the arrangements for covering the cost of the bound submission, which may involve a share of the cost being borne by the student.

**See Section 8: Presentation of thesis (for binding instructions where a printed copy is required)**

The thesis will be uploaded to the university's [Research Database PURE](#) which stores information relating to research and associated activities from across UHI and makes postgraduate research theses publicly accessible.

Theses are also available on the British Library UK thesis database [EThOS](#) which lists all doctoral theses awarded by UK higher education institutions, by harvesting information from the PURE database.

### What to submit

- A non-editable pdf copy of the final thesis and abstract (PDF/A compliant format, as before)
- Final Submission Form - available from Brightspace.



## Thesis embargo

It is the University's intention to store all postgraduate research thesis in electronic format to support the appropriate dissemination of research material by electronic means - read more about Open Access [here](#).

Students and their supervisors should therefore think carefully about the consequences of copyright and intellectual property rights of their work from the outset; students who think an embargo is necessary are encouraged to discuss this with their supervisors as early as possible.

In a very small number of cases, it may be necessary to restrict access to a thesis by applying an embargo. Examples of why an embargo may be required include:

- commercial sensitivity or exploitation
- patent pending
- national security issues
- individual's personal safety issues
- 3rd party copyright issue
- publication issues/intent to publish (if approved, the embargo would not normally be more than one year).

## Type of embargo

Restrictions will normally apply to the electronic version of the thesis AND any print copy requested by the student's academic partner.

The embargo period is normally quite short and **in most cases an embargo period of no more than twelve months is sufficient**. In some cases, it may be appropriate to approve a **longer embargo period which will not normally exceed two years** from the date the research degree was awarded.

Any embargo must have the support of the Director of Studies and will need to be approved by Research Degrees Committee. Following the end of the approved embargo period, the thesis will automatically be made available publicly in the normal way.

There will be no public access to the electronic version of the thesis over the embargo period, however the thesis may be consulted by the Supervisors and/or Head of academic partner. For any print version, the restriction must meet legislative requirements (Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and/or the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations (2004)).

If the thesis has been funded, then the funder may have open access requirements that will need to be considered before requesting an embargo e.g., if funded by UKRI, the usual requirement is that the thesis should be available as open access within 12 months of the award.

## Applying for an embargo

**The embargo application process will be available online through PGR Manager by 2026. Until then, it remains a Word-based submission with the form available in Brightspace, to be sent by email to [gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk)**

If an embargo has not been agreed during the application/registration process, the application should be submitted as early as possible and ideally before the thesis is submitted for examination. At the very latest, it should be submitted before the final version of the thesis is deposited, following examination. Late submission of an embargo request may result in the thesis being made publicly available.

Documentary evidence may be supplied to support the request, which might include:

- a letter from the research sponsor/collaborating organisation or body, confirming that the thesis contains research of commercial sensitivity
- a copy of a confidentiality agreement showing that research participants had taken part under the condition that access to the thesis would be restricted
- a letter from a prospective publisher showing that they would consider publishing works deriving from the thesis only if access to the thesis is restricted. Please note - where the request for embargo relates to publication, you *must* be working on a publication plan; a speculative approach may not be approved. Along with your application, you must also provide an outline of the current publication plan and/or where and when publication will take place.

## Extending an embargo period

Requests to extend the original embargo period should be made to [gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk). The request must be made at least 8 weeks before the end of the embargo period and must be supported by an explanation as to why the extension is required.

## Section 10 – Viva voce examination

### Purpose of the viva

**During 2025, all the processes outlined in this section will be online, through PGR Manager. Until notified, they remain as Word-based processes with relevant forms available in Brightspace - Postgraduate Research module / Registered student forms section, and sent to [gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk)**

Final assessment of a student for a research degree award normally involves:

- Submission of thesis or equivalent body of work for examination
- Independent examination of the thesis or equivalent body of work by individual examiners
- Oral examination (viva voce) of the student by an examination panel.

The primary function of the viva is to allow the student to explain, expand, defend and justify their thesis, in response to the examiners' questions.

Viva preparation is key. Students may find [this information](#) from Vitae helpful. The Postgraduate Research area on [Brightspace](#) provides resources to support the viva process - see 'Training Videos' for The Good Viva Guide and 'Bookable Online Training' for University of East Anglia sessions which include preparing for the viva. The Graduate School also arranges viva training - see the Calendar on [PGR Manager](#) (UHI logins required)

Before the viva, the examiners will have read the thesis and written preliminary reports which they will have exchanged and discussed. Examiners will often come to the viva with a strong sense of the outcome from reading the thesis, but the viva gives the student an opportunity to explain, expand and justify their thesis and demonstrate their skills in participating in an academic discussion with research colleagues.

The student should demonstrate, through these discussions, the thesis arguments, evidence and - in response to the examiners' questions - that the thesis is their own work and that they have a general knowledge and understanding of the field of study.

Published material included in the thesis is subject to the same level of scrutiny by examiners as standard format chapters and students must be prepared to respond to queries that cover the full breadth of thesis content, including publications.

The viva takes place only when a thesis is first submitted. Where a thesis has been re-submitted, a second viva will be held only if Research Degrees Committee approves a proposal to that effect, normally on the recommendation of the examiners.

**[See section 10: Viva outcomes](#)**

## Nomination of examiners

It is normal practice for the Director of Studies to identify possible examiners, liaise with them to check their willingness to act as examiner and obtain details of their previous examination experience.

When considering examiners for work incorporating creative material and/or the presentation and submission is in other than written form, and for thesis incorporating publications, the Director of Studies must ensure the nominees are familiar with - and accepting of - the chosen presentation format.

**All examiner nominations are subject to approval by Research Degrees Committee.** A Nomination of Examiners application should be submitted before thesis submission, enabling examiners and the internal panel chair to be formally appointed by the time the thesis is submitted, so it can be sent to examiners for review straight away.

The examination panel will normally consist of one internal examiner, one external examiner and one independent internal panel chair.

If a student is a full or part-time member of UHI academic staff, at least two external examiners must be appointed in addition to an independent internal chair. In this instance, the appointed internal chair will be responsible for overseeing the arrangements for the examination and for ensuring that policies and procedures are followed.

When a student is employed by the University as a research assistant or research fellow, two external examiners are not required.

**See Section 10: Criteria for the appointment of new examiners PLUS Internal panel Chair**

**Composition of exam panel** - Selecting the optimum examination panel is in everyone's best interest and it is accepted that, for some areas, the most suitable external may be based overseas. Where this is the case, or where the external examiner is UK-based but would be traveling a long distance, the preference would be for a viva by video conference to be arranged.

**See Section 10: Viva format**

Care should also be taken to not ask the same person repeatedly to act as external examiner, i.e., ideally no more than two or three examinations over a two-year period.

The student's home academic partner is expected to cover any expenses incurred by the internal examiner and internal chair attending the viva in person, if these roles are being fulfilled by a staff member from a different academic partner.

**To maintain the independence of the exam panel, the student must not contact the examiners out with the viva, either before or after they have been appointed. Following examination any queries should be directed, in the first instance, to the Director of Studies.**

## Criteria for the appointment of new examiners

In submitting nominations, the following should be adhered to. If any of the criteria cannot be met, a case - outlining the examiner's particular suitability - should be included within the nomination of examiner application.

### Examiner criteria and experience

- An external examiner should normally have experience of examining at least one degree student at the level at which they are being proposed and demonstrate familiarity with and understanding of the UK higher education research degree system.
- If an external examiner from a non-UK university is proposed and is unable to demonstrate familiarity with the UK HE research degree system, then the internal chair should be appropriately experienced and able to brief them on the expectations of a research degree submission.
- Examiners are normally expected to hold a research degree at the level being examined or have other relevant expertise.
- It is not permissible for an individual who is currently registered for a research degree to be an examiner.
- It is recognised that all examiners must gain experience. If it is necessary to appoint an inexperienced external examiner, this must be balanced by the internal examiner and internal chair being of sufficient seniority and having significant experience of examining research degrees.
- Former members of UHI staff may be appointed as external examiners, if they continue to be actively engaged in research and there has been a period of at least three calendar years between their leaving their employment and the date of the viva.
- The internal examiner and internal chair should be an academic staff member of the Partnership (excluding visiting professors or honorary professors).
- Examiners or the internal panel chair should not have had any co-authoring or direct collaborative involvement in the research student's work, or whose own work is the focus of the research project such that there would be a conflict of interest or potential lack of objectivity.
- Academic partners, institutes or centres have discretion to nominate external examiners from other institutions that are part of collaborative partnerships or centres with the University. In such cases, there should be no close connections to the student or the research project, or with the collaborative partnership or centre that might impair, or call into question, the fair and impartial assessment of the student's work.
- If the proposed internal examiner has participated in a thesis panel review for the student, this does not necessarily preclude them from acting as internal examiner. However, they should not have been involved with the research project in any other capacity, and if they have, a declaration must be made on the nomination form to enable Research Degrees Committee to be satisfied that the level of involvement will not impair independence of judgement.

## Internal panel chair

In line with many other institutions - and with reference to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education guidelines - an independent internal panel chair is required for all UHI research degree examinations.

An internal panel chair is not a member of the examining team and, although they will be sent a pdf copy of the thesis, they are not required to examine the thesis or participate in any decision on the academic merit of the thesis.

Their role is to ensure that the viva is conducted in accordance with university's regulations and standard practice for the discipline. Any person accepting nomination as an internal panel chair must be willing to participate in appropriate staff development as organised by the Graduate School.

The Director of Studies should seek a person who fulfils the following:

- A member of UHI academic staff, not directly connected with the student's work, i.e. they should not be/have been a member of the supervisory team or played any significant part in the project or the assessment of candidate (e.g., formal progress reviews).
- Has previously engaged with the research degree examination process in more than one of the following roles: internal examiner, external examiner or a supervisor who has successfully guided a student through the probationary review process.
- Familiar with UHI processes and procedures and specifically have knowledge of UHI research degree regulations and examination processes for the degree under examination
- Has experience in the supervision of students for the degree being examined
- Is of appropriate seniority to confidently engage with the examiners, many of whom will be distinguished scholars in their field.
- Has significant meeting skills and can deal with difficult circumstances with confidence, equity and firmness.

## Chair's role prior to the viva

The internal panel chair should:

- Familiarise themselves with the regulations governing the award of the relevant degree to be able to advise the examiners as required.
- Attend the pre-viva meeting with the examiners and assist in setting an agenda for the examination to consider how the process of examination might best be carried out.

## Chair's role during the viva

The internal panel chair is primarily responsible for ensuring 'fair play' and should:

- Chair the proceedings to ensure due process is followed in accordance with the university's Regulations and Code of Practice, providing regulatory guidance where necessary.
- Facilitate introductions between all present
- If required, explain the format of the viva and clarify any special provisions notified in advance by the Graduate School.
- Clarify, for the benefit of the examiners and student, the meaning of the available outcomes (detailed on the Examiner Final Recommendation form)
- Ensure that the supervisor, if present, only acts as an observer and agrees to maintain confidentiality in respect of the content of the examination.
- Ensure that all main items on the agenda are addressed and that the student is given the opportunity to respond to all questions asked by the examiners.
- Ensure that each of the examiners has a proper opportunity to contribute to the examination process.
- Ensure that breaks are offered to the student when required.
- Should the student become unwell or distressed during the viva, and the examination is stopped, ensure that due process is followed.
- At the end of the viva, ensure that actions required of the candidate and the examiners are clear and understood by all parties.
- Advise the examiners that reports and details of the required amendments should be returned to [gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk) within one week of the viva taking place; ensuring this is done is normally the responsibility of the internal examiner, although by mutual consent, the internal panel chair may be tasked this activity.

## Chair's role after the viva

The internal panel chair should:

- Be available to the student if they have queries about the outcome of the examination, providing clarification where necessary.
- Act as the intermediary between the Director of Studies and examiners where any clarification on required corrections is needed. Note, students should not contact examiners directly.
- Report any concerns following the viva to the Graduate School directly
- Complete the internal panel chair section on the final recommendations report form.

## Disagreement between examiners

In the event of disagreement between the examiners, the chair will seek to reach an agreed conclusion. The chair does not have a casting vote. In the event of the examiners failing to reach agreement, the chair should ensure that the examiners complete the required individual report.

## Arrangements and conduct

### Arranging the viva

The internal examiner is normally responsible for arranging the viva and should contact the external examiner, the student, and the internal panel chair to arrange a mutually convenient date and time, noting that **the viva should normally take place within two months of submission of the thesis**. Where there are two external examiners, the Director of Studies would normally make the arrangements.

Arranging the viva may be delegated to appropriate staff within the academic partner, but the student should not be asked to liaise with the examiners to make these arrangements.

Aside from any necessary exchanges regarding logistics, there should be no discussion between the student and examiners prior to the viva taking place.

The Graduate School should be notified of the viva date, or if there is likely to be a delay that will result in the viva taking place more than two months after submission of the thesis.

[gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk)

### Pre-viva meeting and preliminary reports

- The University does not require the external examiner to undergo a right to work check.
- A pre-meeting should be held before the viva when the examiners should read each other's independent preliminary report (if not exchanged and reviewed beforehand). The examiners should also agree the structure of the questioning and the areas which will be investigated.
- While practice may be as flexible as is required, a viva should not normally be less than one and a half hours. When an examination lasts longer than two hours, appropriate breaks must be agreed.
- The internal and external examiners are equal as examiners, but the internal will normally consider it appropriate to defer to the external in the conduct of the examination. When two externals have been appointed, they too are equal as examiners.
- The entire examination panel is required to be present for the duration of the examination, including when communicating the overall result to the student.
- At the end of the viva, the student and supervisor (if present) should be asked to withdraw while the examiners discuss their report.
- When the decision is agreed, the examiners may make their joint recommendation known to the candidate but must make clear that the final decision rests with the Research Degrees Committee, which may accept or revise the examiners' recommendation.



## Student support on the day

Ideally, a member of the supervisory team should be available before and after the student undergoes a viva, to provide friendly support to the student. The student, the examiners and the internal chair are normally the only persons who may be present at the viva; however, a member of the supervisory team may attend on the agreement of the examination panel and student. If a supervisor does attend, they should only observe and must not participate, and at the end of the viva they should leave with the student.

## Unforeseen issues

- If, owing to illness or other urgent and unforeseen reason, an examiner is unable to attend the viva, it may be postponed to a later date. If it seems that the likely length of postponement would be a serious hardship to the student, it should be considered whether it is appropriate to appoint an alternative examiner.
- If a student is unwell immediately prior to the viva such that they are unable to attend it, they should immediately notify their Director of Studies and the Graduate School; relevant medical evidence in connection to the illness will be required.
- In attending the viva, the student is declaring themselves fit to do so. However, if a student but becomes so unwell or distressed during it, as to be unable to proceed, the examiners should - after consultation with the student - decide whether to continue. If they do continue, the examiners should note in their final report that the student was unwell.
- If the decision is taken to not continue, the examiners should determine whether they have enough evidence to decide or whether it will be necessary to continue the viva on another occasion. The student can also request that the viva be adjourned based on ill health after discussing the matter with the examiners.
- If academic misconduct is alleged or suspected in the actual thesis during the examination process, the examination process must be stopped immediately, even if this is on the day of the viva. The investigation procedures will then be undertaken through the university's academic misconduct policy and procedures.

[See Section 12: Categories of misconduct](#)

## Viva format

The student and Director of Studies should discuss and agree the format at the earliest opportunity, ideally before the Intention to Submit form is submitted. Early consideration will also assist the Director of Studies when approaching examiners, as they should agree to the format before they are nominated to Research Degrees Committee.

Along with considering the external examiner's location, the student's preference should also be considered, particularly if they are studying at a distance and/or returned to their home country.

The following options will normally be available:

### **Face-to-Face, on-site**

Although it is envisaged that the standard viva format would be face-to-face, with all participants attending in person, if the external examiner is based at a distance in the UK or overseas, we ask that you consider the environmental impact of opting for this instead of using the video conference or hybrid options. Please also note that the Graduate School cannot cover the cost of the external examiner's travel expenses from overseas.

When the viva is being held face-to-face, it should be held on campus at one of the academic partner colleges or at UHI Executive Office in Inverness, with all attendees meeting in person. On such occasions, the room in which the viva is being held should be free from external interruptions, including the telephone, and relatively free from obtrusive noise.

### **Hybrid**

Where the external examiner is based at a distance, or prefers to attend by video conference, it will normally be expected that the entire exam panel and the student attend by video conference - noting that the internal examiner's online attendance does not necessarily require them to be off-site.

Where this is the case and the student has a preference, or need, to use campus facilities only the internal chair should attend in person with the student and the videoconferencing principles, and guidance should be followed.

### **Video conference**

If a viva takes place by video conference, the principles below should be followed:

- The viva should not be conducted by audio only, or by telephone conference
- The viva will not be recorded
- To maintain high academic standards, the assessment must remain fair and robust and impartial, and the expectations for the conduct of the examination – including examiner input and the behaviour of all participants – is the same as when face-to-face
- Should local or national requirements result in campus closure, the student has the right to decline the opportunity for a viva by VC and ask for the viva process to be delayed until a later date when face-to-face examination can resume
- When agreeing to undergo examination by VC, the student accepts that they cannot use the format of the viva as a basis for appeal, unless there is a clear breach of regulations
- A member of the student's supervisory team may attend the viva under the same terms and conditions of attendance as with standard face-to-face format, which requires approval by the degree candidate and the examiners. Their involvement must be in a non-intrusive and non-participatory (observer) capacity and to achieve this, during the viva they must switch off their own live video stream and mute their microphone from their connection, but they may listen to and view the proceedings. They must agree not to be in contact with the candidate and the candidate must also agree not to be in contact with the DoS in any way, by any means, during the examination. Failure to comply may nullify the result of the examination and could lead to possible disciplinary procedures

- Where some or all attendees are online, the independent Internal Panel Chair will have additional responsibilities, as outlined in the Viva by VC guidance.

The form **Viva by VC/Hybrid notification** (available on Graduate School/SharePoint site/thesis submission & viva) should be completed and submitted to [gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk) normally not less than one month before the proposed date of the viva. The viva organiser should ensure all attendees have a fully completed copy.

In exceptional circumstances the form can be submitted not less than one week before the date of the scheduled viva, where that viva was otherwise scheduled to take place in face-to-face format.

[See Section 10: Viva by VC guidance](#)

## Viva by video conference guidance

Participants attending by video conference must provide a contact telephone number on the *Application to Undertake a Viva by VC\_Hybrid* form and confirm that they have access to the following:

- A reliable internet connection with sufficient speed to facilitate video conferencing from multiple locations
- Reliable and suitable hardware, i.e. web-cam, PC/laptop, headsets (note: the use of headsets is normally required, to minimise the possible effects of echo and feedback that is evident on some video conferencing platforms)
- The appropriate software, i.e. Microsoft Teams, Skype or equivalent (including a suggestion that both a primary and a back-up system are selected and prepared, to help mitigate against the negative impact of technology failure)
- A private and quiet space for the duration of the examination where they will not be interrupted
- A test call with all participants normally approximately 48 hours before the exam is due to take place and ideally from the locations where participants will be joining the formal viva examination.

As with the standard format viva, the internal examiner is responsible for ensuring that all participants are informed of the arrangements. This includes setting a time which means that no participant is expected to be present at an unreasonable hour for them; reasonable hours normally being 08:00 –19:00 but will depend on individual circumstances. Any time differences between the two locations should be considered to ensure that the student is not disadvantaged by an examination taking place at an inappropriate time.

Once agreement reached, the internal and external examiners must take account of their need to consult privately with each other, e.g., how the pre viva discussion will be conducted; the form and sequence of questions; who should take the lead at various stages of the viva; what, if any, document viewing facilities, etc. might be required.

### In the event of technical failure:

- If the connection drops for one or all participants, then all reasonable attempts should be made to re-establish the connection
- If, after a reasonable number of attempts and time (this is to be left to the discretion of the internal panel chair, but should not normally be longer than approximately 30 minutes), it is not possible to establish a stable connection for all participants, the viva must be abandoned and rescheduled if necessary
- A reasonable period to wait will be longer if the student always remains visible to at least one examiner (up to approximately 60 minutes). If the candidate is no longer visible, then a reasonable time to wait would be much shorter (no more than approximately 15 minutes), to ensure the examination is still robust
- In such an event the internal panel chair will be responsible for conferring with other participants (by phone if necessary) to decide collectively whether to abandon the attempt
- In the event of difficulty in conferring with other participants, the internal panel chair will have the final decision on whether to abandon the attempt
- If the viva is abandoned and sufficient discussion has taken place, it may be possible to recommend an outcome
- If the viva is abandoned and an outcome cannot be recommended, the viva will be rescheduled as soon as possible, and the examination panel will be considered to have not met.

### Before the examination day:

- All participants must have a test call approximately 48 hours before the examination is due to take place. This is not only to ensure the technology works but that each location is suitable. It is also an opportunity for the independent internal panel chair to clarify how the examination will be conducted, including protocols for a drop in connection or abandoning the examination due to technical problems (see below)
- The candidate must inform the examination panel of any academic/research-related materials they intend to have with them and may wish to share with the panel. This may only include relevant material for the purpose of illustrating a critical point in the thesis and/or material that is directly relevant to the viva – for example, in respect of Creative areas such as Art, Design, Performance and Music-based disciplines. It is not intended to permit any inappropriate prompts or helps for the candidate in respect of their viva defence. It is also to be noted that presentation of such material will be affected by the use of video conference technology, and therefore only material suitable for use in this context will be permitted.

### On the examination day – *before the examination starts:*

- Each party must introduce themselves and their role (if preferred, this may form the substance of the initial ‘test call’ but with a brief reminder at the start of the formal viva examination)

- The internal panel chair should confirm the student's identify (the student should be asked to show their UHI student ID card, or the Director of Studies may link-in at the beginning of the viva to confirm the identify)
- If the candidate has notified the panel of any materials they want to present then these must now be shown and must remain visible throughout. They must also confirm that they do not have with them - or have visible to them or available to them in audible form of any kind - any prompts or other inappropriate guidance and advice that would normally be banned within any formal examination process
- The internal panel chair will confirm the process for the examination including the protocol for any drop in connection and any technical issues which results in the examination needing to be abandoned (see below).

### On the examination day – *during the examination:*

- All parties must remain visible throughout, with the sole exception of a short comfort break, which may be permitted in cases where the viva extends beyond 2 hours, or by the agreement of all parties
- Unless agreed as part of a formal Personal Learning Support Plan, the University will not normally permit any person other than a member of the supervisory team to be present. Ideally there should be someone nearby (either physically or in a suitable on-line space) if the experience is distressing in some way, or they feel unwell
- The examination will follow the normal format for a viva voce examination
- The internal panel chair should ensure that the student is not disadvantaged in any way, when compared to the standard face-to-face examination and will have the right to suspend or terminate the viva if technology is not satisfactory (see below). The internal panel chair will not normally be involved in direct questioning of the student
- In the event of any failure with the technology before or during the viva, or other concerns regarding the conduct of the viva, it is the responsibility of the internal panel chair to suspend the examination and to decide whether it is possible for the viva to continue or whether it should be re-scheduled.

### On the examination day – *end of the examination:*

- All participants will be asked to confirm that the viva by video conference format has had no substantive bearing on the examination process.
- The student will be specifically asked to confirm that they acknowledge the completion of the viva event.

### On the examination day – *after the examination:*

- Examiners will discuss in private the examination and determine the outcome, which will then be shared orally and informally with the degree candidate. This will involve the degree candidate logging out of the video conference for a period to be determined by the examination panel, but this will not be more than 60 minutes. Before beginning their discussions, the examiners will ascertain that they are the only remaining participants in the video conference

- Once the examiners have concluded their assessment and all parties have returned to the video conference, the internal panel chair will confirm the decision of the examiners
- The Director of Studies, or another member of the supervisory team, should be available immediately after the viva has formally been concluded to provide support, if required, to the student
- Examiners should complete the joint examiner's report form, commenting on the conduct of the viva voce examination. They should refer explicitly to the use of video conferencing, recording any breaks in connectivity and their duration, or other issues affecting the viva and what impact they had on the conduct of the viva and student
- The internal panel chair should complete their section of the joint report form referring explicitly to the use of video conferencing, recording any breaks in connectivity and their duration, or other issues affecting the viva and what impact they had on the conduct of the viva and candidate.

**See Section 10: Examiner reports and formal notification of outcome**

## **Examiner reports and formal notification of outcome**

Once the viva has concluded and a decision reached, a joint report must be completed in full on the day and signed by the examiners and internal panel chair.

A list of any required corrections should also be included with the joint report submission. Where the outcome is re-examination\* the examiners must also provide a written statement about what is required to bring the thesis up to an appropriate standard.

**Where any examiner report form, written statement or list of corrections is written in Gaelic, an English translation should also be supplied by the examiner at the time of submission.**

\*See Section 10: Viva outcomes

E-mail

The internal examiner should ensure the following reports are fully completed and submitted to [gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk) as soon as possible, but normally within one week of the viva taking place:

- Independent report from each examiner.
- A single joint report form, confirming outcome.
- List of corrections (for re-examination, a written statement on requirements)

The examiners recommendation will be considered for approval by Research Degrees Committee, which has delegated power to recommend to UHI Academic Council whether a thesis be sustained, and the relevant degree be conferred or whether the thesis is referred or failed.

The student will receive formal written notification of the examination outcome from the Graduate School - and will provide the deadline by which a corrected thesis should be submitted.

**Students who fail to make the necessary corrections, or to resubmit their thesis within the stated deadline will not normally be permitted to submit after that date and their registration will be terminated.**

## Criteria for the award of the degree

The minimum and maximum periods of study for research awards are outlined in the [Postgraduate Research Degree Regulations](#)

**Also see [Section 4: Duration of study](#)**

Examiners should consider what can be achieved in the permitted timeframe for the degree. No thesis can be approved unless the thesis meets acceptable standards in the use of English, in quotation and citation, and in presentation. Examiners should also pay appropriate attention to the student's use of evidence (the student's formal declaration that they have composed the work) and that it is a record of work completed by them.

Examiners may also wish to refer to the [Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework Level](#) descriptors for a Research Masters (SCQF Level 11) or Doctoral degrees (SCQF level 12)

### Master by Research (MRes)

For the award of Master by Research, the student should have successfully completed a programme of scholarly research and produced a thesis which displays evidence of originality or is a satisfactory, orderly and critical exposition of existing knowledge within the field concerned. The thesis must be defended through a viva voce examination. For MRes programmes containing a credit-bearing element, there should be a maximum of 60-credits at SCQF Level 11 as a taught component.

### Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

For the award of Master of Philosophy, the student should have successfully completed a programme of scholarly research and produced a thesis that contributes to knowledge, affords evidence or originality and demonstrates application of independent research. The thesis must be defended through a viva voce examination. Please note MPhil is an exit award option from a PhD and is not available as a target award.

### Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

For the award of Doctor of Philosophy, the student should have successfully completed a programme of scholarly research and produced a thesis that makes a distinct and original contribution to knowledge in the discipline and contains work which is considered to be worthy of publication. The thesis must be defended through a viva voce examination.

## Viva outcomes

Examiners have the following outcomes available:

- The degree is awarded unconditionally
- The degree is awarded, subject to the completion of minor corrections to the satisfaction of the internal examiner within three months - this recommendation should be made where minor corrections are either (a) factual, typographic, limited in extent and can be achieved immediately after the oral, or (b) where there is no doubt that the thesis is of a standard for the degree sought but corrections are needed which should not require major re-working nor re-interpretation of the intellectual content of the thesis
- The degree is awarded, subject to the completion of major corrections to the satisfaction of the internal and external examiners within six months
- The student is required to make substantial amendments and to submit the thesis for re-examination by the internal and external examiners within a stated period, which should not exceed 12 months. A second oral examination may be required - minor corrections will be permitted for a resubmitted thesis
- The student is awarded a lower degree without further examination - available only where the target award is a doctoral degree. The intended degree is not awarded, but an MPhil is awarded instead - Minor corrections will be permitted
- The student is not awarded any degree.

## Minor Corrections

Minor corrections should be carried out within three months. One of the examiners, usually the internal, is required to check that the necessary corrections have been completed and submit formal confirmation of this to the Graduate School.

In the case where there are two external examiners plus an internal chair, one of the externals must be chosen to certify that the minor corrections have been completed. The internal chair is not permitted to certify that the student has complete the minor corrections.

Normally this recommendation should be made where minor corrections are either (a) factual, typographic, limited in extent and can be achieved immediately after the oral, or (b) where there is no doubt that the thesis is of a standard for the degree sought but corrections are needed which should not require major re-working nor re-interpretation of the intellectual content of the thesis.

If it is the case that one examiner will be able to check that corrections have been made, then the recommendation that the thesis be sustained subject to minor corrections may be appropriate.

## Major Corrections

Should be carried out within six months. Normally, both the internal and external examiners are required to check that the necessary corrections have been completed and submit formal confirmation of this to the Graduate School.



## Re-submission (re-examination)

Should not exceed twelve months. If an examiner is required to re-read the whole or a significant part of the thesis, or to check every quotation and reference again, then the recommendation should probably be that the student be given the opportunity to resubmit the thesis in a revised form.

When re-submission is recommended, the examiners should also make recommendations about the conditions for re-submission and must provide a written statement about what is required to bring the thesis up to an appropriate standard for the award of the degree.

This statement will be given to the student, who should consult with their Director of Studies if there are any queries when revising the thesis. The student should not be in contact with the examiners during this time and the internal chair, or Director of Studies, may contact the examiners for points of clarification only.

For thesis including publications, examiners are not permitted to request a re-write of published material into standard format following the viva, however they may request inclusion of additional information as an addendum or within the introduction or conclusion of the chapter containing the publication.

## Re-submission of a thesis

Only one re-submission of a thesis will be permitted, irrespective of the degree being considered. Re-submission requires re-examination of the thesis by all the examiners who make a joint report using a re-submission joint report form. Normally, all those appointed to examine the original submission will be required to examine the re-submitted thesis.

Following re-submission, the examiners may recommend that the:

- thesis be sustained
- thesis be sustained with minor corrections
- thesis does not meet the requirements for the degree being examined, but that it does have merits which satisfy the standards required for the award of a lower degree appropriate to the discipline in which the student is registered – available only where the target award is a doctoral degree
- thesis is not sustained. The examiners cannot recommend that the student be given another opportunity to re-submit in a revised or modified form as a thesis may only be submitted twice.

The examiners should clearly state in their first joint report if a second viva is required.

Where a thesis has been re-submitted, a second viva will be held only if a proposal to that effect - normally on the recommendation of the examiners - is approved by the awarding university.

If a second viva is deemed necessary, whilst the focus might be on the elements that the student has been asked to address, the whole thesis would be the subject of the examination. Students should therefore be prepared to answer questions on any part of their thesis.

## Section 11 – Award and graduation

### Conditions of award

To ensure contact details are kept up to date, students should log into UHI Records via the Student Portal

The award can only be confirmed once certain conditions have been met:

- The examiner reports and the agreed outcome have been approved by Research Degrees Committee
- Confirmation from the examiner(s) that they are satisfied that any corrections have been completed.
- Submission of non-editable pdf version of the corrected thesis
- Receipt of relevant final submission form
- All tuition fees have been paid
- For MRes with taught component, all assessed taught modules have been completed successfully
- Physical and data assets owned by UHI / Academic Partner are returned

### Access to computer account

Students should ensure any important personal emails or files on a university computer is saved elsewhere as soon as possible, as once an award is made systems access will be removed three months after the award notification date e., the date of the letter confirming the award has been conferred.

### Graduation ceremony and beyond

All graduates are invited to attend a UHI graduation ceremony. Ceremonies normally take place at each academic partner on different dates and award holders should check with their host academic partner for the date of the ceremony and the deadline for returning their application to graduate.

It is the responsibility of each student to complete an Application to Graduate Form and to decide whether to graduate in absentia or in person. This form will be sent by the central student records office once the award has been conferred.

A fee is payable by all graduates who decide to attend in person at the graduation ceremony. A late fee may be charged to students who apply to graduate after the deadline. There is no fee for graduating in absentia.

After graduation, you automatically join the UHI alumni community, which gives you access to a range of benefits and services that make it well worthwhile keeping in touch with us.

Find out more information and sign up via the [Alumni section of the UHI web site](#).

## Section 12 – Framework for good practice in research

### About good research practice

All those engaged with research have a duty to consider how the work they undertake, host or support impacts on the research community and on wider society.

The [Research Integrity Concordat](#) has been developed by Universities UK and provides assurances that the UK research community continues to ground its work in the highest standards of rigour and integrity. It sets out five commitments that all those involved with research should use to guide their conduct.

Commitment to the principles set out in the concordat helps demonstrate to government, business, international partners and the public that they can continue to have confidence in the research produced by the UK research community. It provides assurances of the standards expected of all stakeholders.

If you suspect a potential breach of the Research Integrity Concordat at UHI [you must report this for investigation](#).

The university has a series of research policies, for researchers to refer and adhere to. For ease, these are all collated centrally in the [Researcher Resources SharePoint](#), which is also accessible to PGRs.

### Academic integrity

Researchers must be honest with respect to their own actions in research and in their responses to the actions of other researchers. This applies to the full research journey, including e.g., experimental design, generating and analysing data, applying for funding, publishing results and acknowledging the direct and indirect contributions of colleagues, collaborators and others.

Researchers are required to declare any real or potential conflicts of interest in their research work, and to seek assistance, if required, from their direct supervisor in the most effective way of managing any such conflict.

Researchers are encouraged to report cases of suspected misconduct to the Graduate School Office in a responsible and appropriate manner.

### Openness in research

While recognising the need for researchers to protect their own research interests, UHI encourages all researchers to be as open as possible in discussing their work with others and with the public. Once results have been published, UHI expects researchers to make available relevant data and materials to other researchers, on request, if this is consistent with any ethical approvals and consents which cover the data and materials and any intellectual property rights.

UHI recognises that publication of the results of research may need to be delayed for a reasonable period pending protection of intellectual property arising from the research. However, any such period of delay in publication should be kept to a minimum.

## Role of external bodies

Where available, UHI expects researchers to observe the standards of research practice set out in codes and guidelines published by scientific and learned societies, and other professional bodies. All researchers should take the necessary steps to ensure they familiarise themselves with the legal requirements that regulate their work, and of all appropriate ethical considerations.

## Leadership and supervision in research

Senior colleagues will ensure that a research climate of mutual co-operation is created in which all members of a research team or an individual are encouraged to develop their skills, and in which the open exchange of ideas and appropriate acknowledgement of the direct and indirect contributions of others is fostered.

Supervisors are required to supervise all stages of the research process, including outlining or drawing up a hypothesis, preparing applications for funding, protocol design, data recording and data analysis. It is the responsibility of the research supervisor to explain best research practice and ethical considerations as early as possible.

Research students will receive training in the Policy and Guidelines on Good Research Practice at induction and throughout their programme of study. It will be a condition of their transition beyond their first year that they have been trained in good practice and satisfactorily understood the Policy and Guidelines.

## Management and ownership of research

At the outset of a research programme all researchers should be clear on management and ownership of data and samples used or created in the course of the research, and the results of the research.

All researchers must keep clear and accurate records of the procedures followed and approvals granted during the research process, including records of the interim results obtained as well as of the final research outcomes. This is necessary not only as a means of demonstrating proper research practices, but also in case questions are subsequently asked about either the conduct of the research or the results obtained. The maintenance of accurate records is also important for potential subsequent commercialisation of research.

Data generated during research must be kept securely in paper or electronic format, as appropriate and in accordance with good practice in the storage of primary data, record-keeping and ethical issues. Back-up records should always be kept for data stored on a computer. Supervisors have a right to access research data stored on UHI systems that are to be used when undertaking research degree studies. This is a standard requirement as part of the Quality Assurance processes of the university and helps to provide assurance externally, not only of the quality but also the integrity of a UHI research degree.

## Ethical practice in research

The UHI Research Ethics Framework has been designed to promote a fair balance between a researcher's right to unrestricted academic enquiry whilst ensuring adherence to appropriate and robust ethical standards to ensure the protection of all those participating in research studies. This includes the Director of Studies ensuring a risk assessment is undertaken as part of the ethical approval process.

The process for gaining ethical approval for research activity is set out in the UHI's Research Ethics Framework and involves completion of the online application form.

All students and staff engaged, or about to become engaged, in research activity should read the framework and associated documents found on the university's [research ethics webpage](#).

- a. Research involving human participants – Researchers should ensure the confidentiality of personal information relating to the participants in research, and that the research fulfils legal requirements such as those of the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulation 2018.
- b. Research involving animals – Research involving animals, or the environment must have the appropriate approval which may require Home Office licenses for the investigator and the project. Researchers must consider, at an early stage in the design of any research involving animals, the opportunities for reduction, replacement and refinement of animal involvement.

## Research misuse

In progressing investigations, researchers should actively consider any risk that their research will generate/outcomes that could be misused for harmful purposes. Where such risks exist, they should seek advice, initially from their Director of Studies, as to the steps taken to minimise such risks.

## Publication and authorship

Results of research should be published in an appropriate form consistent with the academic discipline. It is the responsibility of the lead author to ensure familiarity with the appropriate form. No paper, abstract, report or other output should be submitted without the permission of every individual named on the output, and no person should be named as a contributor without their consent. Anyone who consents to being listed as an author on a paper should accept responsibility for ensuring that they are familiar with the contents of the paper and can identify their contribution to it.

The practice of honorary authorship is unacceptable and the contribution of formal collaborators and all others who directly assist or indirectly support the research must be properly acknowledged.

## Guidelines on keeping research records

Researchers must keep clear and accurate records of the procedures followed, and approvals granted during a research process, including records of the interim results obtained as well as of the final research outcomes. This is necessary not only as a means of demonstrating proper research practices, but also in case questions are asked subsequently about either the conduct or output of the research. The maintenance of accurate records is also important for potential subsequent commercialisation of research.

- a. Keeping formal or written electronic records - Researchers should keep a formal record of their work in a notebook, or where appropriate, an electronic record, used specifically

for this purpose. Where practicable, one central master record should be maintained for each research project.

- b. Data generated - Data generated in the course of research should be kept securely in paper or electronic format as appropriate, and in accordance with good practice in the storage of primary data, record-keeping, ethical issues, the Data Protection Act and the [University Research Data Management Policy](#).

Back-up records should always be kept for data stored on a computer, or preferably, electronic records should be stored on shared drives, which are backed up daily. Consideration should also be given to whether back-up copies of research samples in other formats e.g., biological specimens should be kept.

#### [Items to be included in research record](#)

The following is general guidance on maintaining a record and the type of information to be included. It is not exhaustive, as the information to be recorded will be determined to a large extent by the research area and the circumstances of an individual project.

There is no requirement to duplicate all paperwork associated with a project, or to record all minor activities, or to affix copies of substantial documentation e.g., questionnaires or consent forms. Instead, the record should cross-reference the location of such documents. Record books should include a table of contents. If a record book is lost, damaged or stolen, this should be reported immediately to the Director of Studies.

Types of information that may be recorded and/or cross-referenced:

- Project protocol or design.
- Evidence of peer review.
- Protocol/design amendments and relevant dates.
- Deviations from protocol/design and reasons.
- Evidence of ethical and other approval, as required.
- Details of the research team.
- Information about PhD or training supervision.
- Relevant study documentation e.g., consent forms, questionnaires, clinical record forms etc.
- Details of where and how study documentation is stored.
- Data collection procedures.
- Key data collection dates e.g., biological samples, research clinic attendance, postage of questionnaires, interview dates, focus group dates.
- Data and sample storage procedures and dates of backup of data.
- Data entry procedures including name of current file data, and if/when renamed/updated.

- Description of the quality assurance procedures e.g., backup, data entry quality checks etc.
- Data analysis.
- Who has overseen the analysis?
- List of outputs agreed and authorship.
- Note of any conditions on publication.
- Notes and minutes of any project meetings in particular outcomes and action points.
- Periodic updates on project progress.
- Changes in data format, e.g. changes in coding.

## Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

The university has approved a new [Generative Artificial Intelligence \(GAI\) policy](#) and [UHI Principles on the use of Generative AI tools](#) in learning and teaching, research, and for activities associated with learning, teaching and research. These are intended to support and guide uses of GAI that are mindful, ethical, data compliant, and do not present any detriment to the work of our students and staff or how that work is undertaken and produced.

To support both students and staff in making effective use of GAI as described above, we have developed detailed student and staff guidance. PGR students may find both the student and the guidance of value, as the staff guidance discusses uses of GAI for research and also for teaching purposes (recognising here that many PGRs are also engaged in teaching activities).

### [Student guidance on the use of Generative AI](#)

### [Staff guidance on the use of Generative AI](#)

Please note the above links are only available to UHI students and staff. PGR students may have to request access to the staff guidance (if prompted to request access, please indicate in your request that you are a PGR student).

We also have a suite of GAI tools that have been approved by the university for use by our students and staff. Please note that it is only the GAI tools included on the lists below that are officially approved for staff and student use, and for which you can sign-up using your UHI student e-mail account or UHI staff e-mail account.

### [UHI approved GAI tools for students](#)

### [UHI approved GAI tools for staff](#)

Please note that the above links are only available to UHI students and staff. PGR students may have to request access to the staff tools list (if prompted to request access, please indicate in your request that you are a PGR student).

It is important to read the GAI policy, principles and student or staff guidance before beginning to use GAI in relation to your own research or learning and teaching related activities.

In addition, the following web guide has been produced to provide a general introduction to GAI and to complement both the above resources and student and staff workshops.

## Misconduct

The university is committed to a culture and environment where high standards of personal and professional conduct are encouraged and expected and students carry out their research with due care and diligence, observing relevant University and Academic Partner policies and regulations, upholding the guidelines on good practice in research.

### Academic misconduct

Allegations of academic misconduct will be investigated in accordance with the university's academic misconduct policy and procedures.

Misconduct in research will not normally include honest and reasonable error or differences of interpretation or of judgement in the collection, evaluation or reporting of research results. Similarly, it does not include poor research unless this encompasses the intention to deceive.

The university's definitions of misconduct in research includes, but is not limited to, the following acts or omissions, howsoever occurring:

- Fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, or deception in proposing, carrying out or reporting the results of research
- Piracy (the deliberate exploitation of ideas and work of others without acknowledgement)
- Fraud (including the invention of data, using false information or the misuse of research funds, equipment or premises)
- Publication of data known or reasonably believed to be false or misleading
- Deliberate, reckless, dangerous or negligent deviation from current accepted practice in carrying out research (including failure to meet requirements of ethical review, legislation or relevant guidelines of professional, academic, scientific or government bodies) if this failure results in unreasonable risk or harm to humans, animals, property or the environment
- Misrepresentation, including deliberate misrepresentation of data, undisclosed duplication of publication, failure to declare material interests, misrepresentation of qualifications or experience and misrepresentation of involvement e.g., inappropriate claims to authorship
- Intentional failure to acquire the required favourable opinion from the appropriate ethics committee for research
- Mismanagement or inadequate preservation of data and/or primary materials
- Breach of duty of care, including breach of confidentiality, improper conduct in peer review of research proposals or results.



- Facilitating misconduct in research by collusion in, or concealment of, such actions by others or planning, conspiring or attempting to commit research related misconduct, or any incitement to do so.

## Non-academic misconduct

The university has adopted a policy and procedures on Promoting a Positive Learning Environment, supported by the Student Code of Conduct, which sets out expectations regarding student behaviour. Alleged breaches of the Student Code of Conduct will be investigated under these procedures.

The Student Code of Conduct.

## Section 13 – Appeals and complaints

UHI provides a supportive and welcoming environment for its students in which to conduct their research activities. However, on occasion, students will encounter academic problems and difficulties.

In the first instance, any problems should be raised with the Director of Studies or members of the supervisory team. If this is not appropriate, or if problems continue, students may wish to contact the Graduate School Office or their Third-Party Adviser.

If problems persist and the student is dissatisfied, they should approach the Head of their academic partner and/or Director of their Research Centre, or the Graduate School – [gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk).

### Academic appeals

A student has the right to appeal against an assessment decision.

Academic appeals will only be considered on matters of procedure, competency and/or prejudice. Those involved in considering academic appeals will not review the question of academic judgement, which is a matter solely for the person or committee that has made the academic judgement.

The [Assessment Appeals Procedure](#) provides further information.

### Complaints

Students are encouraged to resolve complaints informally wherever possible - but if a student is unsure about how to pursue a complaint, The Highlands and Islands Students' Association or the Graduate School can offer guidance.

Full details of the UHI complaints policy and procedure.