

Heriot-Watt University  
**POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREE  
CANDIDATE CODE OF PRACTICE**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Postgraduate Research Degree Candidates are full members of the Heriot-Watt University community, supporting the Strategy 2025 themes of Excelling in 'Research and Enterprise' and 'Inspiring Teaching'. Research Degree Candidates **belong** to our community. They **collaborate** with their Supervisory Teams and other researchers. They will be inspired by and **inspire** others, and, as a community, we **celebrate** their successes.
- 1.2. Success in postgraduate research requires a sustained period of application and enquiry, conducted by Research Degree Candidates in a way which complies with best practice in research integrity, and is enabled by the provision of a qualified and supported Supervisory Team and an appropriate research environment. This *Postgraduate Research Degree Candidate Code of Practice* (herein referred to as the Code of Practice) sets out the expectations and responsibilities of each party in delivering a successful outcome. The Code of Practice was last reviewed in January 2022 and was approved by the Research Degrees Committee, the University Committee for Research and Innovation and Senate. It is available from the [Learning and Teaching Policy Bank](#) on the Academic Quality section of the University's website.
- 1.3. The Code of Practice applies to all research degrees in all Schools, and across all modes and locations of study, and ensures:
  - 1.3.1. Provision of effective selection, admission, and enrolment processes.
  - 1.3.2. Provision of an effective Supervisory Team for all Research Degree Candidates, with regular supervisory meetings, and periodic independent scrutiny of progress.
  - 1.3.3. Clarity of responsibilities with Research Degree Candidates assuming co-responsibility for their research programme and personal development with their Supervisory Team.
  - 1.3.4. The provision of an appropriate research environment including: access to adequate facilities, access to an appropriate development programme, and access to a vibrant community of active researchers within cognate disciplines.
  - 1.3.5. Provision of a rigorous and fair examination process.
  - 1.3.6. The setting of expectations to support the operation of institutional quality enhancement and assurance processes.
- 1.4. The Code of Practice provides detailed guidance on the implementation of University Regulation A8 'Research Degrees'
- 1.5. The Code of Practice is consistent with the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance for Research Degrees.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1. The "**Research Degree Candidate**", is any individual enrolled for a postgraduate research degree, on either a full-time or part-time basis, no matter where they are studying, unless otherwise specified. This Code of Practice applies to Research Degree Candidates enrolling for research-based degrees and their practice-based equivalents: Master of Science by Research (MSc), Master of Philosophy (MPhil), Doctor of Philosophy (including by Published Research) (PhD), Doctor of Engineering (EngD) and Doctor of Business Administration (DBA).
- 2.2. An "**Off Campus Research Degree Candidate**" (sometimes referred to as distance learning) is any individual enrolled for a postgraduate research degree and not normally in attendance on any Heriot-Watt University campus on a full-time or part-time basis. Off Campus Research Degree Candidates might also be undertaking Distance Learning taught courses as part of a formal research programme conducted at distance (e.g., EngD or DBA students). The Code of Practice

applies in full to Off-Campus Research Degree Candidates although particular arrangements, with respect to supervision, format of meetings and resources may be tailored on an individual basis.

- 2.3. A **“Continued Affiliation Student”** is a Research Degree Candidate who has completed their minimum required period of study but who has not yet graduated and is required to enrol until such time as their thesis has been submitted.
- 2.4. The **“School”** is any School of Heriot-Watt University.
- 2.5. The **“Institution”** is Heriot-Watt University.
- 2.6. The **“Primary Supervisor”** is the Supervisor appointed to take responsibility for the Research Degree Candidate and for the delivery of this Code of Practice.
- 2.7. The **“Secondary Supervisor(s)”** is/are any other Supervisor(s) appointed to support the Primary Supervisor in carrying out their duties and to provide additional guidance to the Research Degree Candidate. In some cases, a Secondary Supervisor might be pastoral in nature (and not explicitly involved in the research), or be an external approved supervisor based, for example, in a partner university or at the Research Degree Candidate’s place of employment.
- 2.8. A **“Supervisory Team”**, as further defined in section 6.3, will normally comprise the Primary and one or more Secondary Supervisor(s). The maximum number of supervisors is three.
- 2.9. A **“Personal Tutor”** is a support role undertaken by an academic within the same School as a Research Degree Candidate.
- 2.10. A **“Postgraduate Research Administrator”** is a member of non-academic staff of a School with responsibility for administering admission, progress, and other processes for Research Degree Candidates, and the maintenance of the student file.
- 2.11. A **“Director of Postgraduate Research”** is an academic member of staff appointed by a School to oversee the operation of the Code of Practice in the School. This role will usually be taken by a member of the School Research Committee.
- 2.12. A **“Director of Research”** is a senior academic member of staff appointed by a School to be responsible for leading the research activities of that School.
- 2.13. The **“Deputy Principal Research & Innovation”** (DP R&I) is a senior academic in the University, appointed to this role by the Principal.
- 2.14. Research Degree Candidate **“Intellectual Property”** includes research data, computer software and other artefacts created by the Research Degree Candidate, as specified in the Institution’s [Intellectual Property, Confidential Information and Commercialisation policy](#).
- 2.15. A **“Student-Supervisor Agreement”** is the agreement by both parties to adhere to the Code of Practice (Appendix 1 to this Code of Practice).
- 2.16. A **“Supervisory Meeting”** is defined as a prearranged, at least monthly for full-time, reduced commensurately for part-time, meeting between the Research Degree Candidate and one or more supervisors, to review progress and set targets, for which a formal record is kept in the PGR Portfolio. The **“PGR Portfolio”** is an online record that must be completed by the Supervisory Team regularly after formal Supervisory Meetings for all students with a Heriot Watt Student record who have Heriot Watt as their degree awarding institution.
- 2.17. An **“Annual Progress Review”** is a process in which progress is reviewed by a panel that includes academic staff members independent of the Supervisory Team and for which a formal record is kept in the student file. The Institution’s minimal expectations of such a process are outlined in the document “Common PGR Progression Process”. This minimal process is extended by additional requirements of the Research Candidate’s School or their Centre for Doctoral Training

- 2.18 A **“Research Student Committee”** is a formally established committee in each School for consideration of all matters raised by Research Degree Candidates. The Director of Postgraduate Research should be present at these meetings and report back to the School Research Committee.
- 2.19 A **“School Research Committee”** is a formal committee in each School that is chaired by the School Director of Research and reports to the University Committee for Research and Innovation(see below).
- 2.20 The **“University Committee for Research and Innovation”** (UCRI) supports the Deputy Principal (Research & Innovation) in providing research management, co-ordination and leadership across the University, advises senior University managers on all issues relating to research across the University, and develops the necessary University strategy, policies, structures and procedures for the enhancement and facilitation of research, including postgraduate research students.
- 2.21 The **“Research Degrees Committee”** (RDC) is a sub-committee of UCRI which provides institutional-level leadership in relation to all issues affecting postgraduate Research Degree Candidates and programmes.
- 2.22 A **“Student File”** is a formal record of application data, supervisory meetings, progress meetings, notes of absence, etc. and is held for the duration of enrolment in the School under the responsibility of the Director of Postgraduate Research or nominee. The file may be required for review by Senior Managers of the University and must be kept up to date. For clarity,the file might encompass information held across more than one IT and/or paper based system.
- 2.23 The Institution's [Intellectual Property, Confidential Information and Commercialisation policy](#) and its [Student IP Agreement](#) (which a research degree candidate will normally agree to during online enrolment) are considered to be part of this Code of Practice, in so far as they are applicable to Postgraduate Research Degree Candidates. The Institution's Intellectual Property, Confidential Information and Commercialisation policy addresses the ownership, protection and exploitation of all forms of intellectual property, including but not limited to research results, computer software, know-how and information. These documents can be obtained from the Research Engagement Directorate (RED). In certain circumstances the above policies may be waived by the School, for example in the case of Distance Learning Students on the DBA programme, following consultation with Research Engagement Directorate.

### **3. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

#### 3.1. Research Degree Candidate responsibilities:

- 3.1.1. Research Degree Candidates should abide by the expectations set out in this Code of Practice.
- 3.1.2. Research Degree Candidates are encouraged to give feedback on the application of this Code of Practice, or on any other elements of their experience, through the Supervisory Team, Director of Postgraduate Research, and Research Student Committee, and through institutional and national surveys when requested.

#### 3.2. Responsibilities of members of the supervisory team:

- 3.2.1. The Primary Supervisor of a Research Degree Candidate is responsible for ensuring that the Code of Practice is followed in respect of that Research Degree Candidate.
- 3.2.2. Secondary Supervisor(s) will support the Primary Supervisor in delivering the Code of Practice.

#### 3.3. School responsibilities:

- 3.3.1. Schools, through School Research Committees, will ensure that sufficient resources and effective processes are in place to enable the delivery of this Code of Practice to all enrolled Research Degree Candidates whatever their mode or location of study.
- 3.3.2. Schools, through School Research Committees, are responsible for the provision of appropriate infrastructure to support the research of Research Degree Candidates.

- 3.3.3. Schools, through School Research Committees are responsible for nominating Supervisory Teams. They are also responsible for replacing members of the supervisory team who can no longer fulfil their roles.
  - 3.3.4. Schools, through School Research Committees, are responsible for ensuring that effective systems are in place for monitoring the progress of Research Degree Candidates and for giving feedback.
  - 3.3.5. Schools, through School Research Committees must review annually their performance against agreed targets (e.g. for School Review Meetings completed, Submission Rates, Completion Rates) and in response to appeals, complaints and student feedback, and report on this to RDC and the UCRI.
- 3.4. Institution responsibilities:
- 3.4.1. Oversight and, on a two-yearly basis, review of the Code of Practice is the responsibility of the RDC in consultation with the UCRI, RED, the Registry and Academic Support Directorate and the Academic Registrar.
  - 3.4.2. The RDC is responsible for approving Supervisory Teams on behalf of the UCRI.
  - 3.4.3. The RDC is responsible for the development and delivery of the Institution's training policy for Research Degree Candidates.
  - 3.4.4. The RDC must approve, on behalf of the UCRI, the award of any Postgraduate Research degree.
  - 3.4.5. The RDC will consider, annually, School reviews of performance against agreed targets (e.g. for School Review Meetings completed, Submission Rates, Completion Rates) and in response to appeals, complaints, and student feedback.
  - 3.4.6. The RDC will be mindful, when exercising oversight, of the provision of research facilities, development opportunities and support services to Research Degree Candidates studying at all locations.

## **4. RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT**

- 4.1. Research Degree Candidate responsibilities:
- 4.1.1. Research Degree Candidates are expected to behave professionally in the research environment provided and maintain it for other researchers (borrowed equipment should be returned promptly, defects should be reported, laboratories and other facilities should be kept to required standards of cleanliness; internet access should be used responsibly. Penalties relating to student discipline are set out in the Institution's [Student Discipline and Policy and Procedures](#)).
  - 4.1.2. Research Degree Candidates are expected to collaborate with other members of their research group and are encouraged, with the approval of the Primary Supervisor, to develop collaborative associations with other internal, external, national and international research groups.
  - 4.1.3. Research Degree Candidates are encouraged to attend School and Institutional research seminars and appropriate national and/or international fora appropriate for their discipline.
  - 4.1.4. Research Degree Candidates are encouraged to present the results of their research in School and Institutional research seminars, and national and international meetings unless confidentiality agreements dictate otherwise.
  - 4.1.5. Research Degree Candidates must comply with the University policies on (i) [Intellectual Property, Confidential Information and Commercialisation](#), (ii) [Research Data Management](#) and (iii) [Research Publications](#).

#### 4.2. Supervisory team responsibilities:

- 4.2.1. The Primary Supervisor should ensure that sufficient resources are available for a Research Degree Candidate to complete the anticipated research, within the normal period of study for the degree, before offering a place. Resources include provision of appropriate office, studio and/or laboratory space, access to material and data, access to specialised equipment or facilities within the School or Institution, and/or funding to permit access to such facilities externally as appropriate, and access and funding, where necessary, to field study locations.
- 4.2.2. The Primary Supervisor should be knowledgeable in the area of research offered and should advise the School Research Committee of appropriate Secondary Supervisor(s).
- 4.2.3. The Supervisory Team are responsible for encouraging Research Degree Candidates to participate in School and Institution research seminars, and national and international fora unless confidentiality arrangements dictate otherwise.
- 4.2.4. The Supervisory Team are responsible for helping Research Degree Candidates to obtain funds to participate in appropriate national or international fora.
- 4.2.5. The Primary Supervisor, in conjunction with the Research Degree Candidate, is responsible for identifying any intellectual property of commercial potential created in the course of study and contacting RED immediately if any such intellectual property is identified. Such Intellectual Property should be treated as confidential unless RED dictates otherwise. Protection of Intellectual Property should not interfere with the Research Degree Candidate's progress towards a degree.
- 4.2.6. The Primary Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that (i) a Research Degree Candidate is aware of, and subject to, any obligations of confidentiality, which apply to the area of research, and of any Intellectual Property commercialisation issues that may arise, and (ii) aware of expectations arising under the Research Data and Research Output policies.
- 4.2.7. Where collaboration is an integral part of the research project, the Primary Supervisor should ensure that an agreement between the parties, made in advance of any collaboration, specifies intellectual property rights and confidentiality arrangements.

#### 4.3. School responsibilities:

- 4.3.1. A School offering a place to a Research Degree Candidate shall be able to show evidence of appropriate national and international excellence in research and the facilities necessary to allow a diligent Research Degree Candidate to complete the anticipated research within the normal period of study for the degree.
- 4.3.2. Each School Research Committee should appoint a Director of Postgraduate Research to oversee the implementation of the Code of Practice and, normally, a Research Administrator as the administrative point of contact for the Research Degree Candidate.
- 4.3.3. Research Degree Candidates will have representation on the committee structure within the School through the Research Student Committee, which reports to the School Research Committee.
- 4.3.4. Each School will provide on-campus Research Degree Candidates with a designated study space (normally a chair and desk in a room in which research study with minimal disturbance is recognised as the prime consideration) with appropriate computing and experimental resources to undertake the programme of study.
- 4.3.5. Each School will provide on-campus Research Degree Candidates with a designated lockable space.
- 4.3.6. Each School will provide on-campus Research Degree Candidates with individual access to a computer with email, Internet access and print facilities.
- 4.3.7. Each School will provide telephone and photocopying facilities for on-campus Research Degree Candidates.

- 4.3.8. Each School will ensure that Off-Campus Research Degree Candidates have access to equivalent research and study space.
  - 4.3.9. Each School will ensure access to the appropriate specialist library resources and inter-library loans. In the case of Off-Campus Research Degree Candidates, a School will ensure that the Research Degree Candidate has access to appropriate external or internal resources.
  - 4.3.10. Schools will ensure that the full range of facilities are made available to Part-Time on-Campus Research Degree Candidates, and to Off-Campus Research Degree Candidates when visiting campus. Equivalent facilities will be arranged for Research Degree Candidates in institutions with reciprocal arrangements.
  - 4.3.11. Each School is responsible for creating a mechanism whereby Off-Campus Research Degree Candidates can feel they are as much a part of a supportive research environment as On-Campus Research Degree Candidates (such as through appropriate induction, on-line communities, newsletters, etc).
  - 4.3.12. Continued Affiliation Students will have the same support as Research Degree Candidates in their normal period of study, including access to the Supervisory Team. A continued affiliation fee may be required. On completion of this period, such access and facilities (for example, office space) cannot be guaranteed.
  - 4.3.13. Research Degree Candidates have the right to approach the Head of School if they feel other channels are not addressing their needs and rights as set out in the Code of Practice (or the Chair of the RDC if the Head of School is a member of the Supervisory Team or cannot otherwise be approached).
- 4.4. Institution responsibilities:
- 4.4.1. The Institution is responsible for providing appropriate library infrastructure and IT infrastructure support.
  - 4.4.2. The institution is responsible for maintain policies to support a culture of Inclusion for all.
  - 4.4.3. The Institution, through the Research Futures Academy is responsible for providing a research training programme which meets the expectations set out in this Code of Practice.
  - 4.4.4. The Institution, through RED, is responsible for deciding whether any intellectual property can be commercially exploited. Decisions will be made within two weeks of completion, by the Research Degree Candidate and Primary Supervisor, of the Innovation Disclosure Form (IDF) of such Intellectual Property so as not to unduly delay publication.
  - 4.4.5. Research Degree Candidates shall have access to the Institution's [Student Wellbeing services](#), which provide support in a variety of areas including: disability support; counselling; mental health support; student success advice; wellbeing support; and study skills referrals.

## **5. SELECTION, ADMISSION, ENROLMENT, and INDUCTION**

### **5.1. SELECTION AND ADMISSION**

- 5.1.1. Research Degree Candidate responsibilities (prior to enrolment):
  - 5.1.1.1. Applicants are expected to have completed all sections of their application honestly and to have submitted truthful statements in support of their application. Any evidence found to the contrary will invalidate any offer made and may lead to their place being rescinded during the course of study. The application should be supported by appropriate academic and/or industrial referees.
  - 5.1.1.2. If an Applicant is uncertain regarding any aspect of the application, the potential research topic, or the School or University, they are responsible for seeking from the School or Primary Supervisor, if needed.
  - 5.1.1.3. An Applicant will be expected to provide the University with suitable evidence that

sufficient funds (maintenance and fees) are in place to complete the course. This is normally required before enrolment.

5.1.1.4. An Applicant is expected to have satisfied all other admission criteria, including, where appropriate, the payment of any advance instalment of the prescribed tuition fees.

5.1.2. Supervisory team responsibilities:

5.1.2.1. Any member of staff making selection decisions (normally the Primary Supervisor) must have attended appropriate training before undertaking selection.

5.1.2.2. Insofar as is possible, the selector, normally the Primary Supervisor, is responsible for ascertaining the veracity of claimed qualifications through referees and interview.

5.1.2.3. For programmes where completion of coursework is a requirement before the start of a research programme, the Chair of the School Research Committee, or the Director of a CDT (where relevant), may assume the role of the Primary Supervisor up until the time that the research subject area has been determined and a specific supervisor assigned. The full Supervisory Team will be appointed as soon as is reasonably practicable.

5.1.3. School responsibilities:

5.1.3.1. Selection and admission of Applicants is the responsibility of the School.

5.1.3.2. The School is responsible for ensuring that marketing materials for research degrees inform the Applicant of the research strengths of the School, Institutional context and any collaborative arrangements.

5.1.3.3. The School will process all applications and is responsible for ensuring that an Applicant receives an initial response to their application within one month.

5.1.3.4. The School is responsible for explaining the nature of degree awards and admissions to the Applicant.

5.1.3.5. The School is responsible for ensuring that the Applicant is fully briefed on costs and details of financial support, including any scholarship opportunities. Applicants for off-Campus research degree programmes should be made aware of any additional costs to cover off-campus supervision and interaction (which is usually covered by a bench fee). Where applicable, information will include instructions on the payment of advanced instalments.

5.1.3.6. Schools are expected to select Applicants according to their abilities and will require an interview. This interview will involve a panel comprising at least two academic members of staff.

5.1.3.7. Admission will be on the basis of prior academic qualifications as defined in University Regulation A2, Admission, paragraph 9

5.1.3.8. The School is responsible for validating the Accredited Prior Certificated Learning and/or Accredited Prior Experiential Learning records of Applicants.

5.1.3.9. Offers to Applicants should be reviewed either by the School Director of Postgraduate Research or by the School Research Committee prior to the offer being made.

5.1.3.10. With the exception of Independent Distance Learning students, Schools will set start dates on offers to either:

The start of Semester 1 (September)

The start of Semester 2 (January)

The end of Semester 2 (May)

5.1.4. Institution responsibilities:

5.1.4.1. The Institution, through UCRI, will monitor external factors (e.g. SFC, UK funding agency initiatives, QAA Scotland directives) and provide guidance to Schools on their interpretation and/or implications with respect to research degrees and Research Degree Candidates.



- 5.1.4.2. The Institution, through the RDC, may set and monitor targets with respect to postgraduate research degree admissions.
- 5.1.4.3. The Institution, through the RDC, is responsible for setting minimum entry standards for research degree programmes
- 5.1.4.4. The Institution will devise and implement appropriate policies to ensure that it meets Home Office expectations in respect international student visas and study status within the United Kingdom.
- 5.1.4.5. The Recruitment and Admissions Service will normally pass on applications to the appropriate School within one working week.
- 5.1.4.6. The Institution will acknowledge the receipt of applications within one working week of receiving them.
- 5.1.5. Periods of study – PhD
- 5.1.5.1. The minimum period of study for a full-time PhD will be 24 months (36 months for part-time study).
- 5.1.5.2. A full-time PhD/EngD candidate will normally present their thesis (or Portfolio where applicable) within 4 years of the date of first registration for the degree (8 years for part-time study). Where there is a significant taught element the supervisory team will be expected to tailor the project to ensure that the student will be able to complete their programme of study within 4 years. In exceptional circumstances the Senate may extend the above periods.
- 5.1.6. Periods of study - MPhil
- 5.1.6.1. The minimum period of study for an MPhil will be 18 months (36 months for part-time study).
- 5.1.6.2. The maximum period of study for an MPhil will normally be 3 years (6 years for part-time study).
- 5.1.7. Periods of study – MSc by Research
- 5.1.7.1. The minimum period for an MSc by Research will be 12 months (24 months for part-time study).
- 5.1.7.2. The maximum period of study for an MSc by Research will normally be 2 years (4 years for part-time study).
- 5.1.8. Periods of study – DBA
- 5.1.8.1. The minimum and maximum periods of study for a DBA are the same as those for the part-time PhD.
- 5.1.9. Extensions to the period of study
- 5.1.9.1. Research Degree Candidates may, in exceptional circumstances, apply to extend the period of study. [Applications for an extension](#) should be supported by a rationale and, where required, evidence.
- 5.1.9.2. Applications should be submitted early so that they can be approved before the end of the period of study. PGR administrators and supervisory teams should work together to ensure that registration of a student should never lapse. Detailed further guidelines for the application process, acceptable circumstances and durations are found in the document [“Standard Operating Procedure for extensions to candidature for PGR students”](#).
- 5.1.9.3. During the extension period, the student must focus on finishing their thesis; work on publications in an extension period is expressly forbidden as this distracts from thesis production and may result in a subsequent extension being refused.
- 5.1.10. Research Degree Candidates can transfer between full-time, part-time, On-Campus and Off-Campus modes of study at the discretion of the School. One year of full-time candidature will normally be equivalent to two years part-time. Once a student is registered with a ‘continuing

affiliation' student record (see 2.3), there is no option to transfer from full-time to part-time study (or vice versa)

#### 5.1.11. Additional Requirements – PhD by Published Research

5.1.11.1. In the case of PhD by Published Research, the requirements of University Regulation A3, Admissions, Paragraph 9.6 have to be satisfied. Normally, the candidate is expected to have a strong link with the University, either by being a member of Staff, by having collaborated with a member of Staff, or by being a graduate of the University. Exceptions have to be approved by the Senate.

## 5.2. ENROLMENT

### 5.2.1. Research Degree Candidate responsibilities:

5.2.1.1. Research Degree Candidates will complete the enrolment process with the aid of the Primary Supervisor and the School. Enrolment must be authorised by the School Director of Postgraduate Research (or another appropriate member of School staff).

5.2.1.2. Research Degree Candidates must enrol every year for the duration of their studies, including when progressing as a Continued Affiliation Student. Enrolment takes place in advance of the commencement of each new academic year, normally in August, and not necessarily on the anniversary of a Research Degree Candidate's initial enrolment.

5.2.1.3. Research Degree Candidates must acknowledge that full-time enrolment implies full-time application to the research degree programme (averaging 37.5 hours per week). Part-time enrolment normally implies at least 50% application to the research degree programme. Full-time Research Degree Candidates are expected to inform the Primary Supervisor if any paid or unpaid work is being carried out in addition to the full-time study. Full time students are permitted to work up to a maximum of 6 hours per week.

5.2.1.4. Research Degree Candidates must agree to conform to all University Ordinances, Regulations, Policies, and Procedures.

5.2.1.5. Research Degree Candidates are responsible for ensuring that the University is informed of current contact details.

5.2.1.6. Research Degree Candidates are expected to access their Heriot-Watt University email address frequently and to use it for all professional communications related to the research degree programme.

### 5.2.2. Supervisory team responsibilities:

5.2.2.1. The Primary Supervisor will confirm that the research Degree Candidate is able to receive information via their university e-mail address, and if required, that they have access to the Virtual Learning Environment (Canvas).

### 5.2.3. School responsibilities:

5.2.3.1. Completion of pre-enrolment procedures is the responsibility of the School.

5.2.3.2. The School is responsible for supporting the Research Degree Candidate to enrol promptly and for advising the Research Degree Candidate if they have any queries.

5.2.3.3. Except in exceptional circumstances, Schools will only enrol new Research Degree Candidates at set dates during the academic year:

Start of Semester 1 (September)

Start of Semester 2 (January)

End of Semester 2 (May)

5.2.3.4. The School is responsible for providing data on enrolled Research Degree Candidates and Supervisors for internal Institutional and external (e.g. Je-S) purposes as required.

5.2.3.5. The School will ensure that a Primary Supervisor is appointed at the time of enrolment.

5.2.3.6. Schools can request [extensions](#) to periods of enrolment in cases where circumstances, e.g. illness, have affected progress. Schools make the appropriate case to the RDC.

5.2.4. Institution responsibilities:

5.2.4.1. The Registry and Academic Support Directorate is responsible for enrolment of Research Degree Candidates.

5.2.4.2. The RDC can approve extensions and temporary suspensions to periods of study in cases such as illness.

5.2.4.3. The RDC can approve variations to the enrolment period in response to cases being made by a School.

5.2.4.4. The University's [Ordinances and Regulations](#) can be found on the Heriot Watt website.

### 5.3. INDUCTION

5.3.1. Research Degree Candidate responsibilities:

5.3.1.1. On Campus Research Degree Candidates are expected to attend appropriate instruction associated with health, safety, security and emergency procedures and are responsible for following these procedures. Alternative arrangements will be made for Off-Campus Research Degree Candidates where appropriate.

5.3.1.2. Research Degree Candidates will attend scheduled University, Campus (where provided) and School Induction sessions where key elements of this Code of Practice will be communicated to them.

5.3.1.3. The Research Degree Candidate will read and sign the Student Supervisor Agreement.

5.3.1.4. Referral for the assessment of support in relation to special educational needs and/or disability is the responsibility of the Research Degree Candidate, with support from the Primary Supervisor, and should take place during the induction period and via a consultation with the Wellbeing Services.

5.3.1.5. With support from the Primary Supervisor, the Research Degree Candidate will assess their own training needs and create a Personal Development Plan (PDP) as a part of their induction. The PDP should be a living document that also forms part of the Annual Progress Review.

5.3.2. Supervisory team responsibilities:

5.3.2.1. The Research Degree Candidate will be informed by the Primary Supervisor of the University [Health and Safety Policy](#), School-specific practices and guidance, security and emergency procedures, opening hours and access rights.

5.3.2.2. The Primary Supervisor will ensure that the Research Degree Candidate attends

University, Campus (where provided) and School induction sessions where key elements of this Code of Practice will be communicated.

5.3.2.3. The Primary Supervisor will ensure that the Research Degree Candidate is aware of this Code of Practice and that the Research Degree Candidate reads and signs the Student Supervisor Agreement.

5.3.2.4. The Primary Supervisor shall arrange for the Research Degree Candidate to meet appropriate staff (research, IT, laboratory, technical, secretarial, administrative) and other Research Degree Candidates.

5.3.2.5. Referral for the assessment of support in relation to special educational needs and/or disability is the responsibility of the Research Degree Candidate, but with the support of the Primary Supervisor, and should take place during the induction period and via a consultation with the Wellbeing Services.

5.3.2.6. The Primary Supervisor will support the Research Degree Candidate to assess their training needs and to create a Personal Development Plan, which includes participation in relevant University-wide development programmes offered by the Research Futures Academy.

5.3.3. School responsibilities:

5.3.3.1. It is the responsibility of the School's Director of Postgraduate Research to ensure that appropriate School Induction sessions are scheduled for each new Research Degree intake.

5.3.3.2. The Director of Postgraduate Research will advise Research Degree Candidates and Supervisors of research training opportunities available in the School in addition to those provided by the Research Futures Academy.

5.3.4. Institution responsibilities:

5.3.4.1. The Institution, through the Research Futures Academy, will provide University and, where appropriate, Campus Induction sessions which are scheduled to align with the specified Research Degree intake dates.

5.3.4.2. The institution, through the Research Futures Academy is responsible for providing transferable-skills training for Research Degree Candidates at all locations, as well as training for the Supervisory Team. Some of this may be provided by external providers.

## **6. SUPERVISORY TEAM ARRANGEMENTS**

6.1. Research Degree Candidate responsibilities:

6.1.1. The Research Degree Candidate is expected to remain in regular (at least monthly) contact with the Supervisory Team for the duration of enrolment for the research degree. This contact can be face-to-face, by video-conference, telephone or other agreed medium.

6.1.2. The Research Degree Candidate should keep a record of Supervisory Meetings in the PGR Portfolio. Such a record will include date, duration, topics discussed, actions agreed.

6.1.3. The Research Degree Candidate must inform the Primary Supervisor immediately, in writing, of any circumstances, such as illness, adversely affecting their attendance and performance. If any circumstances are likely to affect the Research Degree Candidate for longer than four weeks, the Research Degree Candidate should discuss with their Primary Supervisor whether or not a Temporary Suspension of Studies is appropriate. In such circumstances, the University's [guidelines for Temporary Suspension of Studies](#) should be considered by the Research Degree Candidate. The Research Degree Candidate may wish to apply for a Temporary Suspension of Studies for the purposes of undertaking a placement that is relevant to their research, or working (e.g. developing a spin-out company). In these cases, the maximum total time that may be applied for is 12 months (e.g. 12 months, 2 x 6 months). The Research Degree Candidate should check with the **International Student Advice Office** if there may be visa implications.

6.1.4. The Research Degree Candidate must inform the Primary Supervisor of any paid or

unpaid work being carried out in addition to a period of full-time study.

- 6.1.5. The Research Degree Candidate is expected to be aware of any ethical issues associated with their research and to conduct their investigations in a manner that is consistent with the Research Ethics Policy. Ethical issues must be disclosed to the Primary Supervisor in the first instance. For further information, see the Institution's [Research Ethics Policy](#).
- 6.1.6. A FT Research Degree Candidate is entitled to six weeks (30 days) holiday per year (PT pro rata) and is responsible for seeking the approval of the Primary Supervisor in advance of making holiday arrangements.
- 6.1.7. It is essential that a Research Degree Candidate always practices proper academic and professional conduct, as per the University guidance provided. The Research Degree Candidate must act with integrity and honesty when they are Researching and when engaged in all associated activities.

## 6.2. Supervisory team responsibilities:

- 6.2.1. Members of the Supervisory Team must meet regularly (at least monthly for full-time, reduced commensurately for part-time) with the Research Degree Candidate. Supervisors must return submitted work promptly and with adequate written and/or verbal feedback. Supervisory teams should maintain an equivalent level of contact with Off-Campus Research Degree Candidates through appropriate means (e.g. Teams/Zoom meetings; email).
- 6.2.2. The Primary Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that the Research Degree Candidate maintains a record of Supervisory Meetings in the PGR Portfolio. Such a record might include date, duration, topics discussed, actions recommended. The Primary Supervisor will ensure that the record is accurate, and that feedback is provided in the PGR Portfolio. A formal written record of supervision might be required by the School Research Committee if there is concern about a Research Degree Candidate's progress.
- 6.2.3. The Primary Supervisor is responsible for advising full-time Research Degree Candidates on the implications of any paid or unpaid work undertaken during their study (e.g., impact on meetings, progress, funding arrangements).
- 6.2.4. The Supervisor should be aware of the Institution's [Research Ethics Policy](#) and consult with the University Research Ethics Committee when applicable.
- 6.2.5. The Primary Supervisor is expected to observe the progress of the Research Degree Candidate's research and to report the creation of any exploitable intellectual property to the RED immediately. Such intellectual property should be treated as confidential unless RED dictates otherwise.
- 6.2.6. The Primary Supervisor shall encourage Research Degree Candidates to take holidays throughout the duration of their studies, monitoring and approving these periods (30 days per year for full-time, reduced commensurately for part-time).
- 6.2.7. Supervisors should not normally take on more than 6 Research Degree Candidates as a Primary Supervisor and can supervise no more than 12 students in total. In the rare situations where a Supervisor is being nominated for a greater number, the nomination should be accompanied by a statement setting out how workload will be managed to ensure that all Research Degree Candidates receive sufficient support. Postdoctoral Research Associates can take on a supervisory role of Postgraduate Researchers (up to a maximum of 2) as their third supervisor, however the student must have 2 academic supervisors as their primary and secondary supervisors. Nominated supervisors must also be engaged on a contract which outlives the planned registration of a student.
- 6.2.8. Supervisors should be self-reflective in their supervisory role (e.g. engaging with Research Futures Academy development opportunities and becoming members of Advance HE) and keep up to date with supervisory techniques and research practice.

- 6.2.9. Any member of the supervisory team who can no longer fulfil their roles will notify the School Research Committee or the Director of Postgraduate Research.
- 6.2.10. It is essential that a Supervisor always practices proper academic and professional conduct, as per the University guidance provided. The Supervisor(s) must always act with integrity and honesty.
- 6.3. School responsibilities:
- 6.3.1. The School, through its School Research Committee, will nominate a Supervisory Team for each Research Degree Candidate. The Supervisory Team nominated will comprise a Primary Supervisor and one or more Secondary Supervisors as appropriate to meet academic and practical demands of the research and to avoid conflicts of interest.
- 6.3.2. Nominated Primary Supervisors should normally be members of the academic staff of the University with a PhD, or other doctoral degree, and experience of having supervised a previous doctoral degree candidate to successful completion (not necessarily at this Institution). In some disciplines, such as the creative disciplines, possession of a doctoral degree may not be a disciplinary norm. In these cases, the School may nominate a Primary Supervisor with equivalent research experience.
- 6.3.3. Where a researcher has not yet supervised a previous doctoral degree candidate to successful completion, the School may nominate them as Primary Supervisor so long as they are nominated alongside a Secondary Supervisory with a previous successful completion.
- 6.3.4. Nominated Secondary Supervisors may be members the academic staff of the University with a PhD, other doctoral degree, or equivalent research experience, or may be another 'Approved Supervisor' as approved by the RDC.
- 6.3.5. Schools will ensure that at least one member of the nominated Supervisory Team is research-active in the area of the proposed research project.
- 6.3.6. Schools will ensure that at least one member of the nominated Supervisory Team is contracted to undertake research.
- 6.3.7. Schools will ensure that, for On-Campus Research Degree Candidates, at least one member of the nominated Supervisory Team is based at the same Campus as the Research Degree Candidate.
- 6.3.8. Schools will ensure that Supervisors they nominate, whether experienced or new, engage in regular development and updating of their supervisory skills through participation in Research Futures Academy events.
- 6.3.9. Schools are responsible for monitoring supervision quality and managing issues raised by a Postgraduate Researcher or their supervisor regarding the supervisory relationship
- 6.3.10. In the event of prolonged absence (more than 1 month) of a Supervisor, Schools are required to provide and monitor alternative supervision arrangements.
- 6.3.11. If a member of the supervisory team is no longer able to fulfil their role, then the School must nominate a replacement, ensuring continuity of the work of the Supervisory Team.
- 6.3.12. Supervision must be free of actual or perceived conflicts of interest. Supervision by, or co-supervision with, close relatives or those in close personal relationships would not be appropriate
- 6.3.13. If requested by either the Research Degree Candidate or a member of the Supervisory Team, the composition of the Supervisory Team may be changed with the explicit approval of the School Research Committee or the Director of Postgraduate Research. In the case of a change of supervisor, it is the responsibility of the (potentially new) first supervisor to

submit the relevant paperwork together with the statement of approval.

- 6.3.14. The School shall allocate a Personal Tutor for each Research Degree Candidate. This Personal Tutor will be responsible for meeting with this Research Degree Candidate at least twice a year and will provide support for them for the duration of their studies. Research Degree Candidates can opt out of this process after the first meeting, but can ask to rejoin this process at any point

6.4. Institution responsibilities:

- 6.4.1. The RDC will consider and approve, where appropriate, nominations for Supervisory Teamson behalf of the Institution, including applications for candidates seeking Approved Supervisor status.
- 6.4.2. The Institution, through the Research Futures Academy, will provide a formal development programme for Supervisors.
- 6.4.3. The Institution is responsible for ensuring that every Supervisor is made aware of the Research Ethics Policy.

## **7. DEVELOPMENT OF RESEARCH AND GENERIC SKILLS**

7.1. Research Degree Candidate responsibilities:

- 7.1.1. The Research Degree Candidate is required to participate in induction and transferable skills training courses specified by the RDC.
- 7.1.2. The Research Degree Candidate is expected assess their own training needs and create a Personal Development Plan, actively seeking out development opportunities in areas where their skills require enhancement.
- 7.1.3. A Research Degree Candidate should be able to demonstrate that they have undertaken at least 80 hours per annum of skills training during each year of their course of study through submission of their Personal Development Plan at Annual Progress Review.
- 7.1.4. A Research Degree Candidate can be required by the School to undertake taught postgraduate courses in appropriate subjects and can be requested to undertake examinations. These examinations can be used as evidence of skills development.

7.2. Supervisory team responsibilities:

- 7.2.1. The Primary Supervisor will support the Research Degree Candidate to identify specific training needs and to create a Personal Development Plan, ensuring that the Research Degree Candidate is aware of development opportunities offered by the Research Futures Academy.

7.3. School responsibilities:

- 7.3.1. Schools, through the School Research Committee, are responsible for the provision of subject-specific research training.
- 7.3.2. The Director of Postgraduate Research will advise Research Degree Candidates and Supervisors of research training opportunities available in the School in addition to those provided by the Research Futures Academy.

7.4. Institution responsibilities:

- 7.4.1. The Institution's training framework and training policy for Postgraduate Research Degree Candidates is the responsibility of the RDC.
- 7.4.2. The institution, through the Research Futures Academy is responsible for providing transferable-skills training for Research Degree Candidates at all locations, as well as training for Supervisors. Some of this may be provided by external providers.

- 7.4.3. The Institution will reasonably support or part-support events promoting interaction, networking and communication between Research Degree Candidates across the University and between Research Degree Candidates and external bodies.

## **8. PROGRESSION**

### 8.1. Research Degree Candidate responsibilities:

- 8.1.1. Research Degree Candidates will discuss progress with their Supervisory Team as a part of regular (at least monthly for full-time, reduced commensurately for part-time) Supervisory Meetings, for which a record will be kept in the PGR Portfolio.
- 8.1.2. All Research Degree Candidates will present evidence of their progress at least once a year until submission of the thesis in the Annual Progress Reviews.
- 8.1.3. Research Degree Candidates should submit research reports and other evidence required by their School at least two weeks prior to their Annual Progress Reviews.
- 8.1.4. Research Degree Candidates should keep a record of their transferable skills development, and the skills training undertaken; this record, the Personal Development Plan, shall also be submitted at Progress Review Meetings.

### 8.2. Supervisory team responsibilities:

- 8.2.1. Review of progress is a continuous process and is the responsibility of the Supervisory Team who will discuss progress with Research Degree Candidates at regular (at least monthly for full-time, reduced commensurately for part-time) supervisory meetings, for which a record will be kept in the PGR Portfolio.
- 8.2.2. The Primary Supervisor will identify an Internal Examiner who will take control of the Annual Progress Review process of the Research Degree Candidate. The Internal Examiner cannot be a member of the Supervisory Team but should be a member of academic staff.

8.2.2.1. The Internal Examiner is responsible for ensuring that the appropriate Annual Progress Review process is followed.

8.2.2.2. In particular, the Internal Examiner will collect evidence of a student's progress, arrange and conduct an oral viva (at least during the first Annual Progress Review), and comment on the recommendations of the primary supervisor.

8.2.2.3. Once the process is completed, the Internal Examiner will provide the Research Degree Candidate with written feedback about the conclusions. Feedback will contain statements about progress, project scope and focus and perceived risks to on-time completion.

8.2.2.4. The Internal Examiner will also provide the School's Research Committee and/or the Director of Postgraduate Research with their conclusions and the received paperwork.

- 8.3. The Supervisory Team of a Research Degree Candidate will participate in the Annual Progress Review procedures as required by the relevant Annual Progress Review process for the Research Degree Candidate.

### 8.4. School responsibilities:

- 8.4.1. The School shall specify further the Institution's minimal expectations of an Annual Progress Review outlined according to its needs and publish it to supervisors and Research Degree Candidates.
- 8.4.2. The School (usually the Research Committee and/or the Director of Postgraduate Research) shall consider the findings of the Internal Examiner and make a decision on the future enrolment of the student.

### 8.5. Institution responsibilities:

- 8.5.1. The RDC will monitor the progression process on an annual basis and is responsible for addressing any institutional issues arising from reviews of progress.



## **9. FEEDBACK MECHANISMS**

### 9.1. Research Degree Candidate responsibilities:

- 9.1.1. Individual Research Degree Candidates are encouraged to provide feedback on progress made and issues arising within their studies. This feedback should be provided to a member of the Supervisory Team in the first instance.
- 9.1.2. Research Degree Candidates who feel that they are not receiving adequate supervision, or whose work is not progressing satisfactorily for reasons outside their control, should contact a member of the Supervisory Team in the first instance. If this is not appropriate, the Research Degree Candidate should raise their concerns with their Personal Tutor or School Director of Postgraduate Research or, if they remain dissatisfied, with the Head of School (or the Chair of the RDC if the Head of School is a member of the Supervisory Team or cannot otherwise be approached).
- 9.1.3. In all such cases, it is important for the Research Degree Candidate to take action as soon as the problem becomes apparent, so that their research is not unduly delayed or otherwise impeded.
- 9.1.4. Research Degree Candidates are expected to support the working of the Research Student Committee. Nominated representatives should raise matters of a collective nature, contribute to discussion and the finding of solutions, and prepare the minutes of the Research Student Committee.
- 9.1.5. Research Degree Candidates and graduates are encouraged to take part in institutional and national feedback surveys.
- 9.1.6. Research degree Graduates are encouraged to provide information for first destination surveys, to participate in subsequent surveys and to maintain contact with the University's Watt Club.

### 9.2. Supervisory team responsibilities:

- 9.2.1. The Supervisory Team shall provide responses to feedback from Research Degree Candidates after Supervisory Meetings and a written record of feedback and responses will be kept in the PGR Portfolio.
- 9.2.2. The Supervisory Team are responsible for providing feedback to the School Director of Postgraduate Research for the purpose of improving research degree programmes.
- 9.2.3. The Supervisory Team should reflect on their own performance and seek feedback to help them improve and identify their own training needs via the PDR process.

### 9.3. School responsibilities:

- 9.3.1. It is the responsibility of the School to offer confidential feedback mechanisms for current Research Degree Candidates, Supervisory Teams and external parties, e.g. collaborative organisations, employers and alumni.
- 9.3.2. The School will respond constructively to feedback. Information on action taken in response to this feedback should be provided through the School's Research Committee.
- 9.3.3. Schools should actively seek confidential feedback from Research Degree Candidates on a regular (at least annual) basis. This feedback should be incorporated into the regular (annual) review of academic standards.
- 9.3.4. It is the responsibility of the School to establish a Research Student Committee to discuss the School's research degree provision and to report to the School's Research Committee. The School will also ensure that Research Degree Candidates are represented on those policy committees that are directly relevant to their research degree programmes.

- 9.3.5. The School will issue exit questionnaires to Research Degree Candidates on withdrawal or completion, or organise exit interviews conducted by a relevant person who is independent of the Supervisory Team.
  - 9.3.6. In the event of an unsuccessful outcome following the examination or a student taking longer than 5 years to submit their initial thesis, a meeting should be held between the supervisory team, the Director of PGR and an independent member of the Research Degrees Committee (ideally Chair or Deputy Chair) to review. As part of this process, appraisal, Amendment to Registration and Examination documentation should be reviewed.
- 9.4. Institution responsibilities
- 9.4.1. Academic Registry will actively seek feedback from Research Degree Candidates who have submitted their thesis.
  - 9.4.2. The Institution will respond constructively to any feedback.
  - 9.4.3. The Institution will investigate any formal Research Degree Candidate Complaints in accordance with the [University Complaints policy](#).
  - 9.4.4. The Institution will investigate any formal Appeals in accordance with the procedures laid down in Regulation A12; Student Academic Appeals.
  - 9.4.5. The Institution will conduct regular surveys of Research Degree Candidate satisfaction, locally or as part of national surveys.

## **10. SUBMISSION OF THESIS**

### 10.1. Research Degree Candidate Responsibilities

- 10.1.1. Before commencing writing the thesis, Research Degree Candidates should familiarise themselves with, and follow, the University [Guidelines on Submission and Format of Thesis](#). This includes the required format if a Research Degree Candidate is submitting a thesis using published work.
- 10.1.2. Before submitting the thesis, Research Degree Candidates should familiarise themselves with, and follow, the University procedures for the [submission of a Postgraduate Research Thesis](#).
- 10.1.3. The Research Degree Candidate should submit the thesis electronically through the [online portal](#). This will then be shared confidentially with the examiners.
- 10.1.4. Following the oral examination, and completion of any corrections required by the Examiners, Research Degree Candidates will submit a final thesis copy to the relevant Student Services Centre (please refer to <https://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/examinations/thesis.htm>) within the required timescales. Extensions will not be permitted unless there are exceptional circumstances (eg documented illness). In these cases, extensions would require RDC approval.

### 10.2. Supervisory team responsibilities

- 10.2.1. The Primary Supervisor will help the Research Candidate to prioritise their work to ensure a submission of the thesis within the period of study. In particular, completing the thesis within this timeframe has to be prioritised over writing any other publications.
- 10.2.2. The Primary Supervisor, in consultation with the Supervisory Team, is responsible for advising whether a thesis is suitable for submission to the Examiners.
- 10.2.3. Well in advance of thesis submission (at least 3 months), the Primary Supervisor, in consultation with the Research Degree Candidate and Supervisory Team, will nominate internal and external examiners using an online process. The nominated examiners will be approved by RDC in accordance with the Institution's Regulations.

### 10.3. School responsibilities

- 10.3.1. The School, through the Director of Research, will confirm their support of nominated Examiners at least four weeks prior to submission of the thesis, and will ensure that the Examiners have the appropriate supervisory experience and qualifications. See the [Handbook on Examining for Research Degrees](#).

### 10.4. Institutional Responsibilities

- 10.4.1. The RDC reviews and approves the appointment of External and Internal Examiners of research degrees on behalf of the Senate. The RDC ensures that at least two Examiners are appointed for each Research Degree Candidate, one of whom must be an External Examiner. Two External Examiners will be appointed, as well as an Internal Examiner, where the Candidate is a member of staff.

- 10.4.2. External Examiners will normally be internationally recognised experts in a relevant discipline, with a degree equivalent to, or higher than, that being examined and an active research and publication profile.

- 10.4.3. The RDC will not normally approve an External Examiner nomination:

10.4.3.1. If that Examiner (or a colleague from the same institution and subject area) has examined a Heriot-Watt University research degree in the same subject area within the last two years.

10.4.3.2. If a member of Heriot-Watt University staff in the same subject area has examined a research degree in the same institution and subject area as that of the proposed Examiner in the last two years.

10.4.3.3. If that Examiner is a former staff member of Heriot Watt University unless two years have passed since the termination of their employment at the University.

10.4.3.4. If that examiner has an established research or personal link to any member of the supervisory team (e.g. co-authored publications or jointly held research funding). Further examples and guidance relating to a perceived conflict of interest can be found [here](#).

- 10.4.4. An Examiner should not hold any position with any organisation that has an involvement with the Research Degree Candidate's research or have any other affiliations with the Research Degree Candidate or their Supervisory Team which might be considered as a conflict of interest.

- 10.4.5. Internal Examiners should normally hold a degree equivalent to, or higher than, that being examined and have been engaged in appropriate research or equivalent scholarly activity for a number of years.

- 10.4.6. The Registry and Academic Support Directorate is responsible for ensuring that the Examiners are aware of the examination procedures.

- 10.4.7. The Registry and Academic Support Directorate will send the thesis out to the Examiners, normally within one week of submission, and will advise the Internal and External Examiners that they are expected to be able to review the thesis within four weeks.

- 10.4.8. The RDC shall have oversight of whether Examiners have prepared independent reports prior to the viva. If the RDC is concerned that these reports are not independent, it may seek explicit confirmation that the reports were produced independently.

- 10.4.9. The RDC shall ensure that Examiners have prepared a joint report.

- 10.4.10. The RDC will ensure that a viva is held where required. Under the terms of Regulation A8, Research Degrees, paragraph 10, a viva is normally expected for a Doctorate (PhD) except under exceptional circumstances as outlined within the Regulation. An oral examination is optional at

Masters (MPhil; Master of Science by Research) level, at the Examiners' discretion.

- 10.4.11. The Institution has an Appeals process (Regulation A12: Student Academic Appeals) and publishes the [University Appeals procedure](#) on the web and will make the Examiners' reports available to the Research degree Candidate in the case of an appeal to the Senate.
- 10.4.12. The RDC will monitor submission rates of Research Degree Candidates. The Institution will ensure that all data relating to Research Degree Candidates will be handled in accordance with all relevant data protection legislation and the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.
- 10.4.13. The University's Development and Alumni Office is responsible for maintaining contact with Research Degree Candidates following graduation.

## **11. EXAMINATION PROCEDURES**

### **11.1. Research Degree Candidate Responsibilities**

- 11.1.1. The Research Degree Candidate will attend the oral examination at the time and location agreed with the Internal Examiner.
- 11.1.2. The Research Degree Candidate will be prepared to be examined on the subject of the thesis or on any cognate research areas.
- 11.1.3. The Research Degree Candidate shall be permitted to bring the research thesis and any other authorised materials to the oral examination. Further, the Research Degree candidate may wish or be asked to give a presentation.

### **11.2. Internal Examiner Responsibilities**

- 11.2.1. The Internal Examiner will carry out their role as indicated in the Guidelines for Research Oral Examinations.
- 11.2.2. The Internal Examiner is responsible for arranging the Oral Examination and will ensure that the examination is conducted in a room which is fit for purpose (i.e. private, comfortable and not affected by noise, etc) or that technological interruptions are noted (for vivas held through videoconferencing).
- 11.2.3. Whilst there is no formal expectation of the duration of the oral, the examination should be a positive experience for the candidate and the examiner should explore the candidate's contribution to knowledge at the depth expected of the relevant award.
- 11.2.4. The Internal Examiner is responsible for completing and submitting, prior to the Oral Examination, an independent examination report to the RDC.
- 11.2.5. The Internal Examiner is responsible for organising completion of the Examiner's Joint Report Recommendation Form, indicating the recommendation of the Examiners, following the Oral Examination
- 11.2.6. The Internal Examiner should communicate informally the recommendation of the examiners to the candidate in accordance with University regulations and explain that the formal recommendation and timescales will be communicated in writing by the School once the examiner forms have been received.
- 11.2.7. Following scrutiny of the final version of the thesis, the Internal Examiner is responsible for completing and submitting the "Internal Examiner's Declaration Form" at the time of submission.
- 11.2.8. The Internal Examiner is responsible for ensuring that the School Postgraduate Research Administrator has copies of all submitted forms.

11.2.9. The Internal Examiner must be aware that all completed forms may be made available to the student in accordance with all relevant data protection legislation and the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

11.3. External Examiner's responsibilities:

11.3.1. The External Examiner is responsible for completing and submitting, prior to the Oral Examination, an independent examination report to the RDC.

11.3.2. The External Examiner is responsible for agreeing the content of, and countersigning, the Examiner's Joint Report Recommendation Form completed by the Internal Examiner following the oral examination.

11.3.3. The External Examiner must be aware that all completed forms may be made available to the student in accordance with all relevant data protection legislation and the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002.

## **12. TRANSFER OR TERMINATION OF STUDIES**

### 12.1. Research Degree Candidate Responsibilities

12.1.1. A Research Degree Candidate may voluntarily withdraw from a programme of study at any stage.

12.1.2. A Research Degree Candidate may apply for transfer between and across programmes of taught and research-based study where this is appropriate.

12.1.3. A Research Degree Candidate intending to withdraw from their studies, or to transfer to another programme of study, must inform their Primary Supervisor and the appropriate School(s), and complete the relevant documentation.

### 12.2. Supervisory team responsibilities

12.2.1. If, at any stage, the Supervisory Team are concerned about lack of attendance or progress by the Research Degree Candidate, then these concerns must be documented and communicated to the candidate. In such cases, a written action plan, setting out targets over a specified period (typically of six months), should be agreed by the Supervisory Team and School Director of Postgraduate Research (or where the School Director of Postgraduate Research is part of the Supervisory Team, a nominee), in conjunction with the Research Degree Candidate, and a Progress Review Meeting should be scheduled at the end of the agreed period to determine whether progress made has been satisfactory.

12.2.2. Should the attendance and/or performance of the Research Degree Candidate, in response to a written plan of action, continue to be considered as inadequate, the Primary Supervisor will follow the procedures in the University Regulations with respect to termination of the Research Degree Candidate's studies.

### 12.3. School responsibilities

12.3.1. A Research Degree Candidate who has been given a written plan of work following concerns at any stage, and has been deemed not to have demonstrated satisfactory progress at the subsequent Progress Review Meeting, may be required to withdraw from the University, in accordance with the University Regulations.

### 12.4. Institutional Responsibilities

12.4.1. The RDC shall consider and approve, if supported, proposals submitted by Schools to compulsorily withdraw Research Degree Candidates from the University on the grounds of unsatisfactory attendance and/or performance. In such cases, the terms of Regulation A8 and those of the [University's policy on Compulsory Attendance](#) will apply.

12.4.2. The RDC shall consider and approve, if supported, proposals submitted by Schools to allow Research Degree Candidates to transfer to a different programme of study in accordance with the terms of Regulation A8.

## **13. APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES**

### 13.1. Research Degree Candidate responsibilities

13.1.1. Research Degree Candidates who are unhappy with an element of their experience should contact their Supervisory Team in the first instance. If not satisfactorily resolved, the issue should be taken up with the School Director of Postgraduate Research or, if they remain dissatisfied, the Head of School (or the Chair of the RDC if the Head of School is a member of the Supervisory Team or cannot otherwise be approached). If there is still no satisfactory resolution, the issue may be pursued as a /complaint or appeal in accordance with the formal [complaints](#) and [appeals](#) procedures.

13.1.2. Research Degree Candidates should keep an agreed record of Supervisory Meetings in the PGR Portfolio to act as a record in any future complaint or appeal.

13.1.3. Should a Research Degree Candidate wish to seek informal advice they may also approach the Chair of the RDC, the Heriot-Watt University Student Union (UK Campuses), the HWU Malaysia Student Association or the HWU Dubai Student Council.

### 13.2. Supervisory team responsibilities:

13.2.1. The Supervisor should keep an agreed record of Supervisory Meetings in the PGR Portfolio to act as a record in any future complaint or appeal.

### 13.3. School responsibilities:

13.3.1. The School will provide support to Research Degree Candidates to enable them to obtain clear information about the process for complaints and appeals. Independent support should be available within the School and the Postgraduate Research Candidate should be made aware of the support through the Wellbeing team. A change of supervision, review of facilities or funding should be considered where appropriate.

13.3.2. The School will make efforts to resolve problems in the best interests of both the Research Degree Candidate and the relevant members of staff.

### 13.4. Institution responsibilities:

13.4.1. The Institution shall publish an [Appeals Procedure](#) applicable to all categories of Research Degree Candidates and will maintain records of Appeals as part of Equal Opportunities monitoring with annual reports to Senate and Court as appropriate.

13.4.2. The Institution will publish a formal [Complaints Policy and Procedure](#) and will undertake to deal with formal complaints expeditiously, and will maintain records of complaints as part of Equal Opportunities monitoring with annual reports to Senate and Court as appropriate.

## **14. PLAGIARISM**

14.1. Plagiarism, defined as the act of stealing from the writings of another, is a serious offence. It occurs where there is no acknowledgement in a thesis that some of the writings or ideas belong to another individual. Most academic scholarship involves building on the work of others so it is not wrong to use another person's ideas in a thesis, providing that the source of the information is cited. Whether using a quote from a book, website or other electronic medium, a thesis must give the original author's name and details of the publication. The same applies equally when not using direct quotes. Taking a piece of text and rewriting it so that it says the same thing in a slightly different way is also plagiarism if the original author is not credited.

14.2. There are accepted conventions for making acknowledgements, although these conventions may vary from subject to subject. A Research Degree Candidate must use a style of acknowledgement that is recognised as good practice in their academic discipline. If they are not sure what constitutes good practice, advice should be sought from the Supervisory Team.

14.2.1. Whenever a Research Degree Candidate undertakes assessed work that involves drawing on the writings or ideas of others (this includes material submitted for Progress Reviews), they should make sure that they acknowledge each contribution in the following way:

**14.2.1.1. Citations:** when the work of others is used – either a direct quotation, a figure or a general idea, the work and its source must be acknowledged and identified.

**14.2.1.2. Quotations:** direct quotations should always be identified by the use of inverted commas, and the source of the quotation should be cited.

**14.2.1.3. References:** the full publication details of all references used should be presented at the end of the thesis, or other piece of work.

14.3. The [Student Guide to Plagiarism](#), available in English, Chinese and Arabic language versions, can be found on the Heriot Watt website.

14.4. Research Degree Candidate responsibilities

14.4.1. The Research Degree Candidate is responsible for identifying all attributable passages within their thesis and should familiarize themselves with the characteristics of good academic writing so as to avoid accusations of plagiarism.

14.4.2. The Research Degree Candidate should be aware that their written work will be checked for good practice in citation and referencing.

14.5. Supervisor's responsibilities

14.5.1. The Supervisory Team should make every effort to ensure that all attributable passages are identified as such and appropriately referenced in written work by the Research Degree Candidate.

14.5.2. The Supervisor Team will assist the Research Degree Candidate in understanding what constitutes plagiarism and what good practice in citation and referencing is.

14.5.3. The Primary Supervisor, in consultation with the Director of Postgraduate Research, shall determine whether it is appropriate for anti-plagiarism software to be used as a tool to better inform the student as to the meaning of plagiarism.

14.6. Institution responsibilities

14.6.1. The Institution shall consider any claim of plagiarism in a research degree thesis and is authorised to take disciplinary action against a Research Degree Candidate where plagiarism is identified under the terms of Regulation A13: Student Discipline. The Institution may withdraw an award at any time if plagiarism is proven, as set out in [Ordinance 8 'Deprivation or Revocation of Degrees or Other Awards'](#).

14.6.2. The Institution shall make available anti-plagiarism software and provide training on its application. The normal expectation is that Research Degree Candidates are able to pass a copy of their first Progress Review Meeting Report through anti-plagiarism software, as a learning exercise before submission, and one draft of the completed thesis.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Student-Primary Supervisor Agreement**

This is to confirm that we each have a copy of the Research Student Code-of-Practice and agree to adhere to its contents.

Postgraduate Researcher's Name:

Primary Supervisor's Name:

School:

Programme of Study:

Date of Commencement of Studies:

PGR's Signature:

Date:

Primary Supervisor's Signature:

Date:

Signed copies of this form should be retained by:

- The Student;
- The Primary Supervisor.

A copy of this form should also be placed in the PGRs record.