

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH HANDBOOK**Chapter 2 - Admission of students to a research degree programme under off-campus arrangements****Contents** (*ctrl+click to take you to the section you need*)

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Admission of students to a research degree programme under off-campus arrangements - split-site and distance-based students: statement of procedures.

1. Preamble

1.1 The [University Regulations](#) and the TQA Manual Procedures and Codes of Good Practice apply to students registered under off-campus arrangements¹ and should be read in conjunction with this document.

1.2 The TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 2, Annex 1: PGR Attendance Policy should be read in conjunction with this document.

¹ In the case of professional doctorates the ability to deliver taught elements of the programme by distance learning must have been approved by the University's programme approval process.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 **On-campus:** students will be expected to be regularly attending the University, in-person, for PGR related activity. The frequency of in-person attendance is individual and will be based on the programme requirements, research project and individual supervisory needs. Students must record the agreed model of attendance in their Supervisory Agreement each time it is updated. See the TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 2, Annex 1: PGR Attendance Policy for further details.
- 2.2 **Distance-Learning:** PGR students who are unable to attend campus under the “On-Campus” definition will be required to register for a “Distance Learning” programme. Distance Learning refers to all students who are not normally in attendance at one of the University’s campuses. This may include students who are based in the UK. It will be at the discretion of the Faculty to decide when it is appropriate to define a student as being based off-campus. Students who are based off-campus must either be registered on a split-site or distance-learning programme. Students who are distance-based should spend some time at the University as agreed with their supervisor.
- 2.3 **Split-site:** A student registered on a split-site basis will typically be a research student who, with the agreement of their Faculty, will undertake the majority of their research for a graduate research degree using the facilities of a research organisation² at an off-campus location. ‘Facilities’ here refers to access to those facilities which would be available to students studying on campus.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 Faculty Responsibilities

- 3.1.1 In the case of professional doctorates, the ability to deliver taught elements of the programme by distance learning must have been approved by the University’s programme approval process. This includes higher education institutions, research institutions or businesses with the necessary facilities for students to be able to undertake the research needed for their programme of study.

² This includes higher education institutions, research institutions or businesses with the necessary facilities for students to be able to undertake the research needed for their programme of study.

3.1.2 In the case of split-site students this could include assessing the appropriateness of academic facilities, the adequacy of the arrangements for access to those facilities and the potential partnership benefits to the Faculty from entering into such an arrangement

3.1.3 Faculties will also be responsible for assessing the candidate's suitability for studying on this basis. This includes assessing whether the student has adequate research and language skills to undertake the degree and could also include, for example, assessing what their motivation for studying in this way is, how they plan to manage their studies and how they envisage communicating with the Faculty.

3.2 **Student Responsibilities**

3.2.1 Students will be responsible for applying on the basis that they are satisfied that they will be able to undertake their studies under the arrangements described and on the understanding that they are responsible for making the initial relationship with the research organisation in the case of split-site arrangements.

3.2.2 Where appropriate students will need to supply a letter confirming their right of access to appropriate facilities (see [12 below](#)).

3.3 **University Responsibilities**

3.3.1 The University will ensure that all relevant procedures and policies are maintained and where appropriate advice is given to ensure their effective implementation.

3.3.2 Where necessary the University is responsible for providing Faculties with legal guidance in relation to these arrangements.

4. Eligibility and entry requirements

4.1 Faculties have the discretion to specify the eligibility and entry requirements for candidates applying under off-campus arrangements, subject to the minimum requirements set out in the [University Regulations](#) relating to academic qualifications and English language competence.

- 4.2 Details of the University's standard entry requirements are set out in the University online [prospectus](#).
- 4.3 Faculties will continue to be free to require candidates to have a Masters degree and/or to be registered initially for an MPhil.
- 4.4 Eligibility of off-campus students transferring to campus-based arrangements is subject to Faculty approval and will be considered at the Faculty's discretion and on the basis of the Faculty's ability to provide students with the appropriate resources needed to undertake their studies.
- 4.5 Students must normally apply under off-campus arrangements at point of application. Any changes to these arrangements are subject to the procedures set out in this document.

5. Full time and part time study

- 5.1 Candidates will be registered on a full-time or part-time basis, in line with normal registration procedures. Candidates may change registration status in accordance with the provisions of the TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 5: Periods of Registration and Changes to Registration Status for Graduate Research Students.

6. Periods of study

- 6.1 Candidates will be subject to the periods of study for full-time or part-time students specified in the TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 5: Periods of Registration and Changes to Registration Status for Graduate Research Students.

7. Periods of attendance at the University of Exeter (Study visits)

- 7.1 The total period of visits to the University will normally be between 4 and 12 months over the course of the research degree programme, with study visits of no more than 4 months at a time. This may be scaled down, if appropriate, for the MbyRes programme. The precise attendance requirements will be determined by the Faculty and indicated to the candidate at the time of offer for the degree. These details must then be included in

the supervisory agreement, with any changes to the agreed schedule of visits agreed with the candidate. In deciding on these requirements, Faculties will have regard to the responsibilities of the supervisor and Faculty for the supervision, support and training of the candidate set out in the TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 4: Supervision of Postgraduate Research Students: Code of Good Practice. Faculties will have discretion in deciding how best to carry out these responsibilities, which will include by attendance at the University, by electronic means e.g., email or video conference, by attendance at some other location agreed with the candidate or by visits by Faculty or University staff to the candidate's place of residence (see [10.1 below](#)).

- 7.2 It is often useful for candidates to make an initial visit of 3-4 weeks in order to attend introductory courses and subject specific skills training. Where this is a requirement the Faculty must indicate this to the candidate in writing at the offer stage. Faculties may wish to undertake an initial training needs analysis at a distance in order to ascertain any requirements pertaining to initial attendance on campus.
- 7.3 Students may be required to visit the campus in order to attend their viva. Any other arrangements made in relation to the location of the viva are subject to approval by the Faculty and will depend on appointment of examiners. Where attendance at the University is normally required Faculties must indicate this in writing to the candidate at offer stage.
- 7.4 Faculties may require students to attend the University for further aspects of the degree for example upgrade events, presentations and conferences. Where these are a requirement this must be indicated in writing to the candidate at offer stage. Where possible, Faculties should encourage periods of attendance that maximise the potential for engagement with the research community.

8. Transfer from MbyRes or MPhil to a Doctorate

- 8.1 For those candidates initially registered for an MByRes or an MPhil, the process for transfer of registration to a Doctorate should be conducted in accordance with the

provisions of the TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 9: Upgrade from MPhil, MA by Research or MSc by Research to Doctoral Study.

9. Arrangements for research supervision

9.1 Faculties will be responsible for appointing supervisors in accordance with the provisions of the TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 3: Arrangements for the Supervision of Research degree students: Code of good practice. The lead supervisor will normally be a member of staff at the University. A co-supervisor or PGR Pastoral Tutor may be appointed from outside the University provided that appropriate supervisory support can be given. The lead supervisor will assume responsibility for ensuring adherence to the University Codes, Procedures and Regulations, including, but not limited to the following:

- a. TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 3: Arrangements for the Supervision of Research degree students: Code of good practice.
- b. TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 4: Supervision of Postgraduate Research Students: Code of good practice.
- c. TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 7: Annual Monitoring Review: Code of good practice.
- d. TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 5: Periods of Registration and Changes to Registration Status for Graduate Research Students: Statement of Procedures.

Where the lead supervisor is not a member of staff at the University the University-based supervisor will be responsible for taking reasonable steps to ensure adherence with the University Codes, Procedures and Regulations.

9.2 Faculties will determine appropriate arrangements for supervision, including nature and frequency of contact, consistent with the provisions of the TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 3: Arrangements for the Supervision of Research degree students: Code of good practice. Faculties will need to pay particular attention to the demands placed on candidates while not in attendance at the University and ensure that adequate supervision and support is available.

- 9.3 Supervision of students while not in attendance at the University will be conducted by, for example, email, fax, telephone or video conference as appropriate. It shall be understood that meetings as required by the TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 4: Supervision of Postgraduate Research Students: Code of good practice can be undertaken by these means.
- 9.4 The arrangements for supervision, in particular the level and frequency of contact, should be recorded in a written agreement signed by the supervisor and student as set out in 1.4 of the TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 4: Supervision of Postgraduate Research Students: Code of good practice.

10. Additional costs

- 10.1 Supervisors are not required to visit students. However, Faculties are encouraged to consider the possibility of visiting students to provide supervision, support and training. Where a Faculty requires the supervisor to visit the student, this requirement must be indicated to the candidate at the offer stage. Where the Faculty requires the cost of any such visits to be borne by the candidate or their sponsor, this must also be indicated at the offer stage.
- 10.2 Where a Faculty requires candidates to cover the cost of any travel expenses incurred if the viva is held off-campus this should be made clear at offer stage.
- 10.3 The Faculty should also ensure that applicants are made aware of the potential additional costs they will face during their period of study due to the need to travel to the University for library visits, induction and research training and supervision.

11. Arrangements for provision of skills training

- 11.1 Faculties will need to ensure that candidates are able to receive all necessary research skills training at the appropriate time. It is expected that an initial training needs analysis will take place at the outset of the programme. Faculties may wish to undertake an initial training needs analysis at a distance in order to ascertain any requirements pertaining to initial attendance on campus. Subsequent training needs analyses will be conducted

either face to face or by electronic means, depending on the schedule of visits to the University agreed with the student.

11.2 Faculties will need to ensure that candidates are able, as far as possible, to participate in the generic skills training programme operated by the [Researcher Development Programme](#) (RDP).

11.3 In some cases, research and transferable skills training may be delivered electronically, online versions of some generic skills training courses are available through the [Researcher Development and Research Culture Team](#). However, where training requires physical attendance at the University, Faculties will need to ensure that periods of attendance are scheduled in such a way as to maximise opportunities to undertake any appropriate skills training agreed.

12. Access to appropriate academic resources

12.1 Faculties will need to be satisfied that students will have adequate access to appropriate academic resources while not in attendance at the University. Faculties will need to exercise discretion in deciding what adequate access is and what appropriate academic resources are for this purpose, taking into account the discipline, research topic and students' circumstances.

12.2 Split-site - Students will typically be employed by or registered with a research organisation providing academic facilities. Typically, appropriate academic facilities will include libraries, labs, computers and desk space. Candidates will normally need to provide a letter from an appropriate person in authority at the research organisation confirming the right of access to the academic facilities.

13. Partnerships

13.1 Faculties may accept individual split-site candidates applying independently. Faculties may also wish to establish links with organisations in order to provide a bespoke service for a group of candidates associated with or employed by those organisations. Bespoke

client services could involve fee discounts, supervisory visits or tailor-made training events at the University or off-campus.

13.2 Agreements which are established as an outcome of links with organisations fall under the [University Regulations](#) and the TQA Manual Procedures and Codes of Good Practice, which should be followed as a minimum requirement. Any partnership agreements serve to supplement the regulations outlined. Any arrangement where students are using the facilities of a research organisation would normally be covered by a contractual agreement. Any agreement which sets out arrangements for joint award or supervision must be covered by a legal contract. Faculties should consult the [International Student Support](#) (as appropriate) and the [Academic Partnerships Team](#) prior to entering into any partnership agreement.

13.3 For guidance on establishing international partnership or cooperation agreements please refer to the [Global Partnership guidance](#).

13.4 For additional guidance on establishing partnerships please refer to the [Academic Partnerships guidance](#).

14. Fees

14.1 Students studying under distance-based arrangements will not be given discounted fees.

14.2 Faculties may require the student or their sponsor to bear the cost of any overseas visits required as part of the supervisory process. This requirement, and the costs involved, should be indicated in writing to the candidate at the offer stage.

15. PGR Attendance Policy

15.1 Students, supervisors and DPGRs are expected to familiarise themselves with TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 2: Admission of students to a research degree programme under off-campus arrangements, Annex 1: PGR Attendance Policy.