

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH HANDBOOK

Chapter 2, Annex 1: PGR Attendance Policy

During the Covid-19 pandemic, flexibility was applied to PGRs who were not able to remain in Exeter for caring or personal reasons. The legacy of these new ways of working during the pandemic is changed patterns of attendance and changes in possible models of attendance for PGR students. Whilst this has created a greater degree of flexibility around attendance than may have been the norm pre-pandemic, it has also given rise to some uncertainty for students and supervisors around expectations with regard to attendance. Our guidance on attendance has therefore been updated to reflect and support different models of attendance, and to enable supervisors to set clear expectations for students on attendance in relation to programme requirements. This guidance has been based on the understanding that an “on-campus” student will attend a sufficient number of activities in person (including, but not limited to: induction, supervisory meetings, lab-based research, seminars, skills training and development opportunities), such that they are able to benefit fully from - and contribute to - the Department and Faculty’s research environment.

PGR students are expected to undertake study via two models of attendance: “On campus” or “Distance Learning”. Students who are not registered on a “Distance Learning” programme are, by default, considered to be “on-campus”.

Definitions:

- On-campus: students will be expected to be regularly attending the University, in-person, for PGR related activities. 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 TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 4: Supervision of Postgraduate Research Students, Annex 1: Research Supervision Agreement each time it is updated.
- 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-basis. Students who are distance-based are encouraged to spend some time in the University as agreed with their supervisor.

Any decision to allow a student to be based away from their home University of Exeter campus must be made on **an individual basis**. The student should discuss their request to be Distance Learning with their supervisory team and should be approved by the Departmental DPGR ahead of the student committing to base themselves elsewhere. Any decision should consider the programme, the project and the student’s supervisory needs. Students must be able to receive the full support, training and access to facilities required to complete their programme

successfully. It will be important to establish clarity on expectations and commitments from the outset.

Departments and Faculties should consider any impact on the management of PGR teaching, office space and IT provision. It is important to note that there is no reduction in the offer of standard provision for students on a “Distance Learning” programme, although individual needs and agreed commitments may differ.

There are circumstances where “Distance Learning” is not an option, and these are outlined below.

EXCEPTIONS FROM DISTANCE LEARNING

1. UKRI-funded students

Students funded by UKRI are expected to study on campus and are therefore ineligible for “Distance Learning”. UKRI require students to reside in the UK and within close proximity to their campus. The following statement applies to both full-time and part-time UKRI students:

Place of Tenure

Students are required to be resident in the UK for the majority of their studies. The Student must live within a reasonable travel time of their Research Organisation or collaborative organisation to ensure that they are able to maintain regular contact with their department and their Supervisor. This is to ensure that the Student is not isolated and receives the full support, mentoring, training and access to facilities required to complete their research successfully and to a high standard. The only exceptions to these requirements are to cover periods of absence that are an essential part of their study e.g. fieldwork, study visits or conference attendance.¹

2. International students with a Tier 4/Student visa

Students sponsored by a Tier 4/Student Visa cannot request “Distance Learning” as it is a condition of their visa to reside in or near to their University of Exeter campus in Devon or Cornwall. The exception of any approved periods of fieldwork, which must be reported to the International Student Support Office.

3. Professional Doctorates

This policy does not apply to students registered on Professional Doctorate programmes, which have specific attendance requirements. Professional Doctorate students should consult their programme handbooks for details about on-campus attendance requirements.

4. Visiting PGR Students

It is an expectation that visiting PGR students will be present on-campus for the duration of their visit. Supervisors and visiting PGR students are encouraged to refer to the guidance available in the TQA PGR Handbook, Chapter 16: Visiting Postgraduate Research Students Policy and Procedures.

¹ [UKRI-02042024-UKRI Training-Grant-Terms-And-Conditions-Guidance-April-2024.pdf](#); accessed 21/08/2024

NO CHANGE TO PERMITTED STUDY AWAY ARRANGEMENTS

1. Industrial Partnership programmes

“Split-Site/Partnership” programmes are defined as are either individual or longstanding agreements in which **students are based for all or part of their studies in a partner organisation**. This may include projects that are sponsored with research organisations; industry-based projects; and 'full-time in place of employment' mode of study. These types of arrangements are unaffected.

2. International Partnership Programmes

Students registered through an International Partnership (QUEX, Tsinghua, Insect Doctors etc) where students will be based overseas for a portion of study and will not be affected by this guidance while they are overseas. This policy will apply while they are based in the UK.

3. Approved periods away

Students can be based away from the University for specified periods and activities, such as fieldwork and placements.

This guidance document comes into effect from 01 August 2023, from which point it is expected that attendance will be defined in consultation with supervisors and approved by the DDPGR, where necessary.

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