CODE OF PRACTICE FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREES

2018/19

Every effort is made to ensure that the information provided in this document is correct at the time of publication and accurately describes the research degree programmes offered by the University of the Highlands and Islands.

The online version of this document is the current definitive one and takes precedence in the event of any discrepancy. It is located on the Graduate School website - https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/research-enterprise/grad-school
CONTENTS

SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION & CONTEXT  
1.1 Regulations  
1.2 Committee Structure  
1.2.1 Research Degrees Committee  
1.2.2 Graduate School Committee  
1.3 Research Integrity  
1.4 Intellectual Property Rights  
1.4.1 Assignation of intellectual property rights by students  
1.4.2 Patents and copyright  
1.5 Data Protection  
1.5.1 Higher Educational Statistics Agency (HESA)  
1.5.2 Subject Access requests  
1.6 Criteria for the Award of Degree  
1.6.1 Master by Research (MRes)  
1.6.2 Master of Philosophy (MPhil)  
1.6.3 Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)  
1.7 Support Networks  
1.7.1 UHI Graduate School Office  
1.7.2 Postgraduate Research Coordinator  
1.7.3 Supervisory Teams  
1.7.4 Third Party Monitors  
1.7.5 Validated and Non-Validated Research Degree Areas  
1.7.6 Academic Partners  
1.7.7 Students with UHI Executive Office  
1.7.8 Students with Disabilities  
1.7.9 HISA (UHI Student Association)  
1.7.10 UHI Careers and Employability Centre  
1.8 Student Engagement  
1.8.1 PGR Reps  
1.8.2 PRES  

SECTION 2 – APPLICATIONS, ADMISSIONS & INDUCTION  
2.1 General Principles  
2.1.1 Research Degrees offered by UHI  
2.1.2 Entry points  
2.2 Entry Requirements  
2.2.1 Qualifications  
2.2.2 References  
2.2.3 English Language Requirements  
2.2.4 Tier 4 Visas  
2.2.5 ATAS certificates and Tier 4 visas  
2.3 Application procedures: General Information  
2.3.1 Interviews  
2.3.2 Formal Offers  
2.3.3 Timescales  
2.4 Enrolment and Induction  
2.4.1 Enrolment  
2.4.2 Induction and Training  
2.4.3 Council Tax
2.4.4 Applicant and Student Personal Data

SECTION 3 – PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS & CONDITIONS OF STUDY  page 14

3.1 Location of Study  14
3.2 Learning Resources  14
   3.2.1 Library Services  14
   3.2.2 Computing Services  14
   3.2.3 Email  14
   3.2.4 Blackboard/Virtual Learning Environment  14
3.3 Tuition Fees and Miscellaneous Charges  15
   3.3.1 Changing Mode of Study: The Effect on Tuition Fees  15
   3.3.2 Suspended Study: The Effect on Tuition Fees  15
   3.3.3 Other Charges  15
   3.3.4 Outstanding Debt  15
3.4 Conditions of Study  15
   3.4.1 Registration and Enrolment – Year One  15
   3.4.2 Annual Re-Enrolment  16
   3.4.3 Attendance  16
   3.4.4 Tier 4 Students Attendance Monitoring  16
   3.4.5 Holiday  16
   3.4.6 Illness and Accident  16
   3.4.7 Maternity and Paternity  16

SECTION 4 – PROGRESSION & SUPERVISION  page 17

4.1 Duration of Study  17
4.2 Progress Monitoring and Skills Audit  17
   4.2.1 Postgraduate Structured Management Framework (PSMF)  17
   4.2.2 Progress Monitoring Form  27
   4.2.3 Unsatisfactory Progress  27
4.3 Supervision  28
   4.3.1 The Supervisory Team  28
   4.3.2 Contact Between Students and Supervisors  28
   4.3.3 Absence of Supervisor  29
4.4 Responsibility of the Supervisory Team  29
   4.4.1 Admission  29
   4.4.2 Quality Assurance  29
   4.4.3 Induction  29
   4.4.4 During the Research Degree Programme  29
   4.4.5 Skills Training  30
   4.4.6 Completion  31
4.5 Responsibilities of the Research Student  31
   4.5.1 Progress Monitoring  31
   4.5.2 Admission  31
   4.5.3 During the Research Degree Process  32
   4.5.4 Ethics  32
   4.5.5 Skills Training  32
   4.5.6 Completion  32
4.6 Changes to the Supervisory Team  33
4.7 Skills Training and Development  33
   4.7.1 Personal Development  33
   4.7.2 University-Wide Training and External Events  33
SECTION 5 – CHANGE IN STUDENT CIRCUMSTANCES

5.1 Change to Mode of Study or Degree
5.2 Suspension of Studies
  5.2.1 Applying for a Suspension
  5.2.2 Sponsors
  5.2.3 International (Tier 4) students
5.3 Extensions and Reductions
  5.3.1 Extension to Period of Study
  5.3.2 Sponsors
  5.3.3 International (Tier 4) Students
  5.3.4 Examples of Extension Circumstances
  5.3.5 Reduction to Period of Study
5.4 MRes with Taught Component
5.5 Withdrawal and Termination
  5.5.1 Withdrawal Initiated by Student
  5.5.2 Termination Initiated by the University
  5.5.3 Tuition Fees
  5.5.4 International (Tier 4) students

SECTION 6 – THE RESEARCH THESIS

6.1 General Guidance on Writing the Thesis
6.2 Word Count and Language
  6.2.1 Thesis Submitted in English
  6.2.2 Thesis Submitted in Gaelic
6.3 Presentation
6.4 Submission for Examination
  6.4.1 Intention to Submit
  6.4.2 Students Submitting Late Without Approved Extension
  6.4.3 Students Who Fail to Submit Before End of Approved Study
  6.4.4 What to Submit (Examination)
  6.4.5 Where to Submit (Examination)
6.5 Submission of Final, Hard-Bound Thesis
  6.5.1 What to Submit (Final Version)
  5.5.2 Where to Submit (Final Version)
6.6 Thesis Embargo
  6.6.1 Types of Embargo
  6.6.2 When is an Embargo Needed?
  6.6.3 Applying for an Embargo
  6.6.4 Extending an Embargo Period

SECTION 7 – EXAMINATION

7.1 Nomination and Appointment of Examiners
7.2 Requirements for Examiners
  7.2.1 The Examiners
  7.2.2 The Oral Examination/Viva
  7.2.3 Arrangements and the Conduct of the Oral Examination
  7.2.4 Examiner reports
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>The Outcome of the Examination</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Resubmission of a Thesis</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Consideration of Examiners' Reports; Notification of Outcome</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SECTION 8 – AWARD & GRADUATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Conditions of Award</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Access to Computer Account</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>Graduation Ceremony</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>Keeping in Touch</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SECTION 9 – GOOD RESEARCH PRACTICE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Integrity in Research</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>Openness in Research</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>Role of External Bodies</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>Leadership and Supervision in Research</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>Management and Ownership of Research</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>Ethical Practice in Research</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.6.1</td>
<td>Research Involving Human Participants</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.6.2</td>
<td>Research Involving Animals</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.6.3</td>
<td>Research Involving Oral Data Collection</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>Research Misuse</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>Publication and Authorship Practice</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.9</td>
<td>Guidelines on Keeping Research Records</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.9.1</td>
<td>Keeping Formal or Written Electronic Records</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.9.2</td>
<td>Data Generated</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.9.3</td>
<td>Items to be Included in a Research Record</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.10</td>
<td>Academic and Non-Academic Misconduct</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.10.1</td>
<td>Non-Academic Misconduct</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.10.2</td>
<td>Academic Misconduct</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.10.3</td>
<td>Research Misconduct</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.10.4</td>
<td>Principles for Investigation of Allegations of Research Misconduct</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.10.5</td>
<td>Involvement of External Funding Agencies</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SECTION 10 – APPEALS & COMPLAINTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>Academic Appeals</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>Complaints</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

This document represents a quality framework for the admission, supervision and examination of all research degree students across the University of the Highlands and Islands, and provides guidance and practical support for all postgraduate research (PGR) applicants and students as well as staff concerned with the supervision and teaching of PGR students.

The information that follows is based on the UK Quality Code for Higher Education and provides guidance for good practice in the delivery of research programmes and should therefore be read by all those involved in the PGR student journey, including students and their supervisors.

This document will be subject to review on an annual basis.

1.1 REGULATIONS

The current UHI Academic Regulations are available on-line and this document should be read in conjunction with Section 14b – Postgraduate research degree regulations.

1.2 COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

1.2.1 Research Degrees Committee (RDC)

The Graduate School Office works closely with UHI’s Research Degrees Committee (RDC), which is responsible for overseeing the registration, support, progression and examination of research students and for the recommendation to the UHI Academic Council of the final degree award. Specifically RDC shall:

- Oversee the registration, progression and examination of research students.
- Consider change requests, e.g. extension, suspension, change of mode of study and degree.
- Consider any progress monitoring issues raised by the Graduate School Committee.
- Monitor and review the UHI Postgraduate Research Code of Practice for Students and Supervisors.
- Receive reports on research student complaints.
- Support training for students in connection with their studies and staff in research supervision.
- Monitor and review research student support issues including training, induction, library, and ICT and equipment access.
- Receive reports on the student hardship fund.
- Consider and review strategies for recruiting and retaining research students with high potential.

1.2.2 Graduate School Committee (GSC)

The purpose of the Graduate School Committee is to ensure the satisfactory progression of postgraduate students through the review of periodic progress reports. It is the duty of Graduate School Committee to highlight any concerns about student progression to supervisors and students and to make recommendations about actions to be taken where necessary. The committee will also discuss general issues and needs, including training requirements, emerging from the postgraduate monitoring process and report these to RDC for consideration.
1.3 **RESEARCH INTEGRITY**

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

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

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

Please see Section 9 for further information relating to good research practice.

1.4 **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS**

1.4.1 **Assignation of intellectual property rights by students**

Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) are the rights legally recognised to protect ownership *inter alia* of literary, artistic and scientific discoveries. In recent years there has been a growing international appreciation of the direct benefits, which the proper protection of academic IPR can bring to the individual ‘inventor’, the institution and the nation. This has led to the present policy of several governments, including the UK, giving the ownership of IPR generated by public funds to the relevant institution, provided that there are in existence the required policies and procedures to ensure full protection and encourage beneficial exploitation.

If an employee of UHI makes a valuable discovery as a result of the terms of their employment, the ownership of that discovery therefore belongs to UHI. Students may be employees of UHI according to the terms of their funder. Students who are not employees of UHI would own the intellectual property that arises from their work unless any sponsorship agreement covering them states otherwise. However, in practice it is often difficult to distinguish between the contributions of individual students and supervisors.

To overcome these problems UHI’s [IPR Policy](#) states that, where intellectual property is generated by postgraduate research students, the owner of the intellectual property developed and/or generated by that postgraduate student will be the employer of the students’ lead supervisor. That is, UHI has agreed that an assignation of intellectual property rights by students to UHI shall be a condition of registration for students. This assignation is limited to IPR arising from the studentship. Further, where there are no joint ownership issues or sponsorship agreements in place, the right to opt out will be offered to those who wish it.

The assignation of IPR must be explained to the student and an IPR agreement template is currently available on Blackboard. Academic Partners can use this as a guide for constructing their own IPR agreement with postgraduate students.

In return, for assigning all their IPRs to UHI during the period that they are a student, UHI undertakes to do the following for the student:
• Assess the protection and exploitation and exploitability of any invention or discovery made or jointly made by a student speedily and at its own cost so as not to delay academic publishing unduly (although publishing may actually be delayed).
• Protect any IPRs at its own cost if those rights are judged, at the absolute discretion of UHI, to have acceptable commercial potential.
• Should they decide not to proceed with the protection and/or exploitation of any student’s intellectual property and/or associated intellectual property, rights will revert to the student.
• Reward the student or students concerned on the same terms as a member of staff. At present the net income (after recovery of legal and patent costs) from exploitation of any intellectual property is shared one third to the inventor or inventors, one third to UHI and one third to the inventor(s) academic area.

In return, the student undertakes to do the following things:

• Notify UHI Graduate School office in writing and in the first instance through their Director of Studies, and as fully as may be required, of any invention or discovery arising from their studentship which in the opinion of the student of the Director of Studies has the potential for commercial exploitation.
• Assist UHI and do all things including maintaining confidentiality and the execution of all documents at UHI’s cost as may be required by UHI in order to secure for UHI the full benefit of and beneficial legal ownership of IPRs assigned to UHI provided that UHI shall be primarily responsible for securing to itself such beneficial and legal ownership.
• Notify the Graduate School Office, in the first instance through their Director of Studies, of any arrangements entered into by the student with third parties. This could include sponsors, prior to the commencement of the studentship which might reasonably be expected to affect UHI’s rights to any IPRs arising in the course of or in connection with the studentship. The student shall notify UHI in advance of any such arrangements as may be entered into following the commencement of the studentship and the student shall not enter into any such arrangements without the prior consent in writing of the University.

1.4.2 Patents and copyright

The main areas of IPR, which are relevant to research, and scholarly work are patents and copyright. To provide full patent protection there must be registration with the Patent Office before the invention becomes public knowledge. It is therefore essential to obtain advice on the patentability of an invention and its protection before publishing a paper, providing drawings, giving a lecture or even discussing one’s work informally at scientific meetings. The patent process can be very expensive and is often beyond the financial resources of individuals. Copyright ownership must also be legally established through the provision of acceptable evidence and again requires the obtaining of relevant advice.

1.5 DATA PROTECTION

UHI requires a certain amount of personal information for research students and to ensure the proper completion of their chosen programme of study. All personal information provided by students will be treated strictly in terms of the Data Protection Act 2018; their confidentiality will be respected and all appropriate measures will be taken to provide for the integrity and security of the data. The data students provide will be used for stated purposes only and students will be informed of any changes to the relevant privacy notice(s).
1.5.1 Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)

Every year UHI will send some information held about students to HESA. HESA collects, and is responsible for, the database in which student HESA information is stored. HESA uses this information in its own right, for example to publish statistics about students in higher education. HESA may link information we have provided to other related datasets such as UCAS, NSS, Individual Learner Record and Student Loan Company data (‘linked data’). All uses of HESA information and linked data must comply with the Data Protection Act 2018. For further information about data protection and the data HESA holds please see www.hesa.ac.uk/dataprot or email data.protection@hesa.ac.uk

For more information on HESA data and how it is used, please see here.

HESA is a registered charity and operates on a not-for-profit basis. It may charge other organisations to whom it provides services and information.

1.5.2 Subject Access requests

Under the Data Protection Act 2018, students have the right of access to the data held about them by the University, HESA or other data controllers.

1.6 CRITERIA FOR THE AWARD OF DEGREE

1.6.1 Master by Research (MRes)

For the award of Master by Research the student should have successfully completed a programme of scholarly research and produced a thesis which displays evidence of originality or is a satisfactory, orderly and critical exposition of existing knowledge within the field concerned. Masters by Research degrees can also be awarded with Distinction on the unanimous recommendation of the examiners if they judge the thesis to be of outstanding quality overall in terms of presentation, and other attributes including, for example, source discovery and interpretation, literature review, scholarly analysis, originality and/or contribution to knowledge. The thesis must be defended through a viva voce examination.

1.6.2 Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

For the award of Master of Philosophy the student should have successfully completed a programme of scholarly research and produced a thesis that makes a contribution to knowledge, affords evidence or originality and demonstrates application of independent research. The thesis must be defended through a viva voce examination.

1.6.3 Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

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

The minimum and maximum periods of study for research awards are outlined in the Postgraduate Research Degree Regulations.
1.7 SUPPORT NETWORKS

UHI has a duty to provide academic and pastoral support mechanisms for postgraduate research students and students support is delivered through a number of routes and this should include access to relevant policies and documents. Guidance and support is available in the following areas:

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

The UHI Terms and Conditions for Applicants and Students states what you can expect and be entitled to as a UHI student as well as the responsibilities and expectations regarding conduct and discipline while registered as a UHI student.

1.7.1 UHI Graduate School Office

The Graduate School Office is based at the UHI Executive Office in Inverness and is the focal point for the support, development and administration of the University’s postgraduate research student journey from application to graduation and can provide advice, information and support to research students and their supervisors.

The team also deals with all matters relating to the submission of theses and formal contact with examiners. In addition, team members are Clerks to the Research Degrees Committee and Graduate School Committee and deal with any student-related matters arising from these committees.

The Graduate School Office acts as a point of contact for any student with an academic or pastoral issue. They are the first point of contact for all registration and student-related issues and can guide students towards specific services such as welfare guidance, counselling or disability support through UHI Student Support Services.

Further information regarding the Graduate School Office responsibilities and individual team members can be found here and the team can be contacted on T: +44(0)1463 279 432 E: gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk

1.7.2 Postgraduate Research Coordinator

A Postgraduate Research Co-ordinator is available at each Academic Partner or Centre – they are responsible for ensuring a local induction event takes place for all students and can act as a local point of contact and referral for student, supervisor and Graduate School queries.

- Executive Office:
  Centre for Health – Prof Ian Megson / Centre for History – Dr David Worthington
- Highland Theological College – Dr Jamie Grant
- Inverness College – Dr Melanie Smith
- Lews Castle College – Prof Frank Rennie
- Moray College – Nikki Yoxall
- North Highland College – Prof Stuart Gibb
1.7.3 Supervisory teams

The student’s supervisory team, in addition to performing academic duties, has a responsibility for pastoral care, offering welfare advice where appropriate and directing students to specialist Student Support Services where necessary.

1.7.4 Third Party Monitors

The Graduate School Office allocates all students with a Third Party Monitor who will be a named UHI researcher from another Academic Partner. Third Party Monitors are not involved in the day-to-day progress of the student but can be contacted by the student for independent academic advice concerning any matter affecting the student’s research or academic progress.

1.7.5 Validated and non-validated research degree areas

When an academic area requires approval, the academic and pastoral support services provided are specifically reviewed and should be of an appropriate standard. However, if a studentship is proposed in a non-validated area, the hosting Academic Partner must still provide these services, locally or by agreement with another Academic Partner.

1.7.6 Academic Partners

When a research student application is submitted by a supervisory team, and signed by the head of the Academic Partner, this provides assurance to RDC and the student that the hosting Academic Partner commits to providing student support services as part of postgraduate provision.

Where a Centre, Institute or equivalent attached to an Academic Partner hosts postgraduate research students, that body and the Academic Partner have a responsibility to provide appropriate student support through local provision or by another arranged route, which should be made known to the students.

Academic Partners will have a nominated Student Support Officer, or someone who has responsibility for student support, to whom students will have access and can answer queries and direct students to appropriate local guidance and support including counselling services, mentoring networks, careers advice, welfare services and occupational health schemes (if provided by an Academic Partner to students). Postgraduate research students sometimes require specialist support and in such cases, the Student Support Officer can seek advice from UHI Student Services or the Graduate School Office in order to assist in securing specialist help.

Where a Centre, Institute or equivalent are associated with UHI Executive Office, which does not have all of the specialist academic and welfare provision students usually offered by an Academic Partner, the Graduate School Office will provide the primary route for Student Support with referral to the appropriate specialist support service as required.
1.7.7 Students with UHI Executive Office

In the case of a Centre or Area hosting students and being associated with UHI Executive Office, student support services might be provided through an agreement with another Academic Partner, alternatively students can contact the Graduate School Office who will refer them to the appropriate support service.

Centres or Areas currently associated with Executive Office include Nursing, the Department of Diabetes and Cardiovascular Science, and Rural Health and Wellbeing (at the Institute of Health Research and Innovation, Inverness) and the Centre for History (Dornoch). Students will be notified of the appropriate support route at their partner induction event.

1.7.8 Students with disabilities

Research students who disclose a disability whilst at UHI have the opportunity to engage with their local academic partner student support system and, as such, to discuss their needs with Academic Partner student services. This may lead to a Personal Learning Support Plan (PLSP), where appropriate. Please visit the University’s Disability Matters web pages for further details.

Our privacy notice explains how the University will process and use your data. Please ensure you’ve had an opportunity to read this before discussing your needs with your disability adviser.

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

1.7.9 HISA (UHI Student Association)

The Highlands and Islands Students’ Association (HISA) represents the interests of all students at the University of the Highlands and Islands and its thirteen academic partners at a regional level. HISA aims to make sure the student voice is at the heart of all decisions about learning and teaching and the student experience. HISA has Postgraduate Research Student representation on its committees and can act as an advocate for students as well as a source of support. More details are available here.

1.7.10 UHI Careers and Employability Centre

Advisors at the UHI Careers and Employability Centre can be contacted for free confidential careers and employability advice for all students regardless of where they are based. The Graduate School Office can also offer events, support and careers information directly to students.

1.8 STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Postgraduate research students are encouraged to provide feedback on the quality of the services they receive and on the experience of postgraduate research delivery at UHI. This can be done by contacting the Graduate School Office directly or through the UHI Red Button service.

1.8.1 PGR Reps

Each Academic Partner and Centre is encouraged to nominate a Postgraduate Student Representative to facilitate dialogue and feedback on the postgraduate student experience and to address any issues at an Academic Partner in a timely fashion. Representation by Postgraduates on committees at Academic Partner level is also encouraged. Two Postgraduate Research Student
Representatives also sit on RDC and one on Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee and can bring any issue affecting the quality of provision to those committees for discussion and action.

1.8.2 PRES

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

We conduct PRES biennially and in the last survey in 2017, the University of the Highlands and Islands achieved an 89% student satisfaction rating relating to the experience of students on their research degree programme. This score is 7% above the Scottish and UK sector average and represents one of the best scores in the UK.
SECTION 2 - APPLICATIONS, ADMISSIONS AND INDUCTION

2.1 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

2.1.1 Research degrees offered by the University of the Highlands and Islands:

- PhD (Doctor of Philosophy)
- MPhil (Master of Philosophy)
- MRes (Masters of Research)

Under the accreditation arrangement with the University of Aberdeen, the following may also be awarded to existing students who enrolled at the University of the Highlands and Islands prior to June 2017:

- MLitt (Master of Letters)
- MSc by Research (Master of Science by Research)

PhD registration is confirmed on the basis of a formal probationary review held approximately 12 months following the date of initial enrolment (18 months for part-time students).

2.1.2 Entry points

PhD applications will normally be considered at any time - each research student will be working on their own piece of research so it is possible to start at the beginning of any month (formally the 1st of each month), providing this is acceptable to the supervisors and the Academic Partner concerned. Some MRes degrees have set starting dates during the year.

2.2 ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

2.2.1 Qualifications

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

- A master’s degree at postgraduate level of a University in the United Kingdom or equivalent, or
- A first or upper second class honours degree of a University in the United Kingdom or equivalent, or
- Other qualifications or experience that, in the opinion of the Research Degrees Committee on the recommendation of the Principal or equivalent of the Academic Partner concerned, affords sufficient evidence of their availability to benefit and at the academic level required.

2.2.2 References

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

At least one reference must be from someone who is independent of the proposed supervisory team.
2.2.3 **English language requirements**

To undertake study successfully students need to speak and write English fluently. Applicants whose first language is not English is required to have sat an IELTS test within two years prior to their registration date unless the applicant has a prior UK degree or can provide suitable evidence (to be approved by RDC) of the standard of their English.

Applicants are required to pass the IELTS test with a minimum score of 6.5 including a score of 6 or above for writing. Applicants who do not satisfy the ‘direct entry’ criteria may be offered entry on the condition that they either: (a) achieve the minimum entry requirement by themselves, or (b) successfully complete an approved Language Centre 6 week or 12 week Summer School Programme, depending on their IELTS score, before the commencement of their degree.

A English Language test is not required if an applicant is a national of one of the following countries: Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, The Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Canada, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, New Zealand, St Kitts and Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago and the United States of America and they are a native English speaker.

2.2.4 **Tier 4 visas**

All international applicants will require need a Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) letter from the University in order to apply for a Tier 4 visa. The University cannot issue the CAS until the ATAS certificate has been received (if applicable) and an unconditional offer is made – see below.

Holders of a Tier 4 visa who enter the UK as a student must be aware of, and adhere to, the immigration rules. Failure to comply with rules risks an individuals’ student status and may result in an adverse UK immigration record and may result in being asked to leave the UK. Also at risk is the University’s Sponsor Licence and the status of all the international students studying at UHI. Further guidance on applying for a Tier 4 visa can be found [here](#).

2.2.5 **ATAS certificates and Tier 4 visas**

Certain science and technology subjects require an ATAS (Academic Technology Approval Scheme) clearance certificate - [research areas that require ATAS clearance](#).

Applicants who need to apply for ATAS clearance must do so before they apply for their Tier 4 visa and will need a copy of their conditional offer letter which, where relevant, will include a statement from UHI to support their ATAS application. For further information regarding the ATAS application process please see [here](#).

2.3 **APPLICATION PROCEDURES: GENERAL INFORMATION**

There are typically two ways that applications for research degrees are made:

- Speculative - where individuals interested in studying for a research degree might approach academic staff informally to discuss their plans and seek advice about their suitability for research, or
- Responsive - where individuals respond to an advertisement for a specific project funded by a Studentship.

Please see the following flow chart for detailed information on the processes associated with research degree enquiries and applications.
2.3.1 Interviews

Wherever possible, interviews should be conducted face-to-face although in some circumstances – for example where applicants are overseas – it may be necessary to make alternative arrangements, such as by Video Conferencing or Skype.

2.3.2 Formal offers

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

An unconditional offer may only be made where the applicant has all the necessary qualifications, experience and required documents for entry.

A conditional offer may be made where the applicant currently lacks a necessary qualification or requirement, for example, the completion of a taught programme, a language qualification or submission of references.

2.3.3 Timescales

Offer letters will normally be sent out no more than ten working days after RDC approval. In planning for new starts, the Director of Studies must take into account the time it might take for the offer to be accepted by the student and for further processing to be done, as follows:

- **Home/EU students** – Unconditional offer letters to Home/EU students will normally be sent out at least two weeks before the proposed start date, therefore the RD1 application form should be submitted to the Graduate School Office at least six weeks before the proposed start date

- **International students (including international students already in the UK)** – Much longer timeframes than those noted for Home/EU students apply to International student processes, as additional UKVI-related documents have to be obtained before a visa is issued.

2.4 ENROLMENT AND INDUCTION

2.4.1 Enrolment

Before commencing studies all students are required to register online with UHI and follow the enrolment process. Once enrolled, a current student card will be provided, along with instructions on how to access the library and online electronic resources. Students must enrol with UHI each subsequent academic year (in August) and will be sent a reminder regarding this.

During the enrolment process students should update any missing personal details online, check entry qualifications, academic records, set up or renew access to computing facilities/email, check/pay fees and agree to abide by University rules, regulations and procedures, including those relating to intellectual property (IP) rights. Students can also update their personal details at any point throughout the year via the student records system UHI Records.

2.4.2 Induction and training

The Graduate School Office provides two formal induction events during the academic year (usually in October and March) for all PGR students across the Partnership. The event provides information
on the role of the Graduate School Office and articulates the Student Support services offered. If a student is unable to attend, induction resources are also made available on the PGR area of Blackboard (see section 3.2).

Induction is part of a broader range of activities through which students are encouraged to take part in academic and personal development and networking. In addition, the annual Postgraduate Conference and a comprehensive suite of professional development and generic skills training courses bring students together in a variety of ways from face-to-face delivery to online self-study.

Hosting Centres or Academic Partners are responsible for the organisation of a local PGR induction to ensure that students are aware of all academic and pastoral services, procedures and policies. The Academic Partner PGR Co-ordinator, or other nominated person, is responsible for organising this process at a local level and ensuring that induction introduces key personnel at each Academic Partner or Centre, with whom the student may have contact during their studies e.g. the local Student Support Officer.

2.4.3 Council tax

Full-time students are exempt from Council Tax. However, students who withdraw from the University for a period of time may incur a liability. It is the students’ responsibility to find out if they are liable for Council Tax payments. This exemption does not extend to owner-occupiers who let to a non-student. Part-time students and students in their writing up year(s) are not usually entitled to exemption and will be liable to pay Council Tax.

Enrolled students who wish to claim Council Tax exemption and require confirmation of their full-time student status should contact the Graduate School Office.

2.4.4 Applicant and Student personal data

The University of the Highlands and Islands is committed to protecting your personal information and being clear about what information we collect from you and how we use it. Our privacy notice explains how we collect, store, process and share personal data and your rights in relation to the personal data we hold, specifically concerning the processing of the personal data of the University’s postgraduate research degree applicants and students. This information is supplementary to the University’s HE admissions and enrolment privacy notices.

Students are responsible for ensuring their personal data held on the UHI student records system is accurate and current and may update their record at any time via the Student Portal.
SECTION 3 - PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS & CONDITIONS OF STUDY

3.1 LOCATION OF STUDY

In line with Postgraduate Research Regulations research study may be undertaken at a recognised UHI location and/or in association with other research centres in the UK and overseas, provided adequate supervision can be given. Full-time PhD students will normally be expected to spend a minimum of 6 months at a UHI location (3 months for full-time Masters) over the course of their studies (this does not apply to students who hold a Tier 4 visa).

On application, the Director of Studies and the RDC will decide whether off-campus study is viable and that adequate supervision, and appropriate access to library, study and training provisions can be provided.

3.2 LEARNING RESOURCES

3.2.1 Library services

UHI research students have access to UHI library services and resources - further information can be found at here

3.2.2 Computing services

Once registered on the UHI student records system, students will be allocated a username, e-mail address and password. Students will retain the same username throughout their time at UHI but they will have to re-register in August, at the start of each academic year, to ensure continued access to systems.

3.2.3 Email

The UHI allocated email address will be used for all Graduate School communications with students. Students wishing to use an alternative email address must ensure mail from their UHI account is forwarded. It is the student’s responsibility to check e-mail on a regular basis. The failure to check e-mail, non-receipt of e-mail due to a mailbox being over quota or the non-delivery of a message to a non-UHI account cannot be used as grounds for an academic appeal.

3.2.4 Blackboard/Virtual Learning Environment

Blackboard is UHI’s virtual learning environment. Postgraduate Research Students have their own designated Blackboard site ‘Postgraduate Research’ which can be accessed with a UHI student ID and password.

The PGR area on Blackboard provides students with details on key processes and associated documents and forms required from registration to graduation, as well as a large source of internal and external training opportunities and funding information.

It is strongly recommended that this Blackboard area as routinely checked, as the Graduate School Office regularly updates the announcements page to highlight relevant news, resources and training/event opportunities.
3.3 **TUITION FEES AND MISCELLANEOUS CHARGES**

Sending out invoices, collecting payments and arranging direct debits is the responsibility of the Finance department of the hosting Academic Partner and students should contact them directly for information or to discuss any problems regarding the payment of fees.

Tuition fees are charged for each year of study. The rate is reviewed annually and will rise each year, at least in line with inflation – current fee information can be found here.

Students registered for a University of Aberdeen award should be aware that an automated finance system often sends out ‘statements’ to students, which look like invoices and can cause concern. If received, students are advised to send a copy of the statement to gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk and to not pay directly to the University of Aberdeen.

3.3.1 **Changing mode of study: the effect on tuition fees**

Any change from full to part-time study, or vice versa, will have an effect on the tuition fees charged each year. RDC consider requests to change mode of study, and if approval is given, the re-calculation of fees will be managed by the Academic Partner Finance Office.

3.3.2 **Suspended study: the effect on tuition fees**

Tuition fees are not payable during the period of suspension, although full-time students would become liable for council tax. Periods of suspension do not count towards the student’s period of study, and the expected end date will be amended accordingly.

3.3.3 **Other charges**

Please see current fee information for details of additional charges that may apply.

3.3.4 **Outstanding debt**

*UHI award* students - graduation will not be permitted if there are outstanding tuition fee debt;

*University of Aberdeen award students* - are required to pay all outstanding debts before graduating.

3.4 **CONDITIONS OF STUDY**

3.4.1 **Registration and enrolment – year one**

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

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

- Overseas students – must attend in person to confirm visa details
- Until enrolment has been completed, it is not possible to access any University services
- At first enrolment – and annually thereafter – students and/or their sponsors become liable for payment of tuition fees.
3.4.2 Annual re-enrolment

Subject to satisfactory progress, continuing students are required to re-enrol each year; this process is managed by the Graduate School Office and students must re-enrol promptly in order to avoid disruption to their student status or access to physical resources.

3.4.3 Attendance

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

Consideration of time commitments and expectations should take place during the first supervision meeting, which should be held shortly after enrolment.

3.4.4 Tier 4 students attendance monitoring

Following the introduction of the Point-Based System for immigration by UK Visa and Immigration, all students holding a Tier 4 visa must provide a copy of all pages of their passport, including the visa page and biometric card (if applicable) at registration. The Graduate School Office retains copies of these documents on file alongside copies of academic transcripts/certificates, English Language proficiency certificates and all relevant contact details.

Students are subsequently subject to monthly attendance checks throughout the duration of their studies (undertaken by a designated supervisor) and provide their passport for yearly checking. If requesting to study off campus, UHI must be satisfied that the request complies with the law regarding attendance requirements, before approval can be given.

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

3.4.5 Holiday

For full-time students, the time and duration of any holiday period must be approved by the Director of Studies and students are advised to discuss plans for taking time off with their supervisors before confirming holiday bookings.

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

3.4.6 Illness and accident

Students should ensure their Director of Studies, or another member of the supervisory team, are informed of any situation that results in unexpected absence. Please also refer to Section 5 – Change in Student Circumstances (Suspension of Study).

3.4.7 Maternity and paternity

Please contact the Graduate School Office for queries relating to the University’s maternity policy.
SECTION 4 - PROGRESSION AND SUPERVISION

4.1 DURATION OF STUDY

There is a standard period of study time allowed for each of the research degrees offered by the University and end dates of each student are calculated on the basis of these. All students are required to submit a thesis before the end of their approved period of study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Degree</th>
<th>Mode of Attendance</th>
<th>Standard Period</th>
<th>Maximum Period</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>36 months</td>
<td>60 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part time</td>
<td>60 months</td>
<td>84 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPhil</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>24 months</td>
<td>48 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Part-time</td>
<td>42 months</td>
<td>66 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master of Research</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>36 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(MRes)</td>
<td>Part time</td>
<td>24 months</td>
<td>48 months</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Changes to registration, including mode of study and interruptions – see section 5.

4.2 PROGRESS MONITORING AND SKILLS AUDIT

All postgraduate research students are required to complete regular progress monitoring reviews in order to ascertain that progress is satisfactory and to identify and address any issues through appropriate student support.

Identifying training and development needs forms part of this process and will allow research students and supervisors to review and enhance skills and competencies and to plan for research training needs on an annual basis. Thereby ensuring students are well prepared for likely eventualities in the research environment and equipped for later professional and career challenges.

The Vitae Research Development Framework can be accessed using your UHI email address and used when undertaking a skills audit. The Framework articulates the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of successful researchers and is structured into four domains which set out the wide-ranging knowledge, intellectual abilities, techniques and professional standards expected in order to undertake research, as well as the personal qualities, knowledge and skills to work with others and ensure the wider impact of research.

4.2.1 Postgraduate Structured Management Framework (PSMF)

The Postgraduate Structured Management Framework has been developed to support research students and their supervisors by providing a framework that identifies expected milestones and activities for all research degree students. It is intended that academic areas modify the frameworks to suit their needs, while retaining a core element to ensure consistency of quality supervisory practice.

Progress monitoring reports are completed by students and supervisors and should be signed by the Head of the Academic Partner. Once completed, reports should be returned to the Graduate School Office for consideration by the Graduate School Committee. This committee reviews all progress reports and provides feedback to students as necessary.
**Role of supervisory team** - regular meetings with the student and the supervisory team over the course of the degree are essential for ensuring that degree milestones are successfully achieved. The framework indicates some of the key responsibilities of the supervisory team.

**Reports and monitoring** - the timing of the mandatory periodic progress reports are indicated in the framework.

The aims of each progress report is for the student to consider and report on

- Progress, with specific reference to PSMF milestones, and
- Objectives for next reporting period.

Each report will be completed by the student and their supervisory team, signed by Head of AP and then submitted to the UHI Graduate School Office to be considered by the UHI Graduate School Committee who will provide feedback to the student and supervisors.

Students are expected to submit probationary reports following the submission of substantial pieces of work to supervisors and a thesis panel for academic review. The timing of these are indicated in the framework below. Supervisors will indicate on these reports whether the student should continue to the next phase of their studies.

**Thesis panels** - It is strongly recommended that all students undertake a review of their academic work with a thesis panel at the times indicated in the framework. The thesis panel should consist of two members of UHI academic staff who are research active in the student’s field but are not involved with the student in a supervisory capacity. If two suitable academic staff cannot be identified, student work should be independently reviewed by one academic as a minimum.

The student should submit a substantial piece of work to the thesis panel in advance of a panel meeting where the student will deliver an oral presentation on progress to date and discuss with the panel the submitted work and future directions. There should be the opportunity for students to speak with the panel without the supervisor(s) being present – and vice versa. Recommendations for the student will be delivered by the panel and recorded in a report of the panel meeting. Thesis panel reports should be submitted to the UHI Graduate School Office with Probationary and Annual reports.
## POSTGRADUATE STRUCTURED MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR A 36 MONTH FULL-TIME PHD PROGRAMME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 Period</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Activities to achieve milestones</th>
<th>Training and development NB: students are required to attend at least one UHI student conference during their registration period.</th>
<th>Role of supervisory team</th>
<th>Reports and monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1-3M         | Agree Research topic | Defining research area and identifying relevant literature  
Formulate research rationale and begin literature review | Training needs assessment (Introduction to Vitae Researcher Development Framework)  
Student AP induction (UHI induction at Oct or Mar) | Regular discussions about scope of research | 3M progress report  
Introduction to third party monitor |
| 3M-6M        | Identification of preliminary research questions  
Develop preliminary thesis plan | Literature review  
Read UHI Research Ethics Framework and develop application for ethical approval | Attend relevant training courses  
Discuss research questions and early work on literature review  
Decide timescale and format of supervisory meetings | 6M progress report (mid-year report) |
| 6M-12M       | Complete draft of full literature review | Formal report submitted to thesis panel | Attend relevant training courses | Provide comments on written material |
| 12M          | Decision on continuation to 2nd year | 1st review meeting with thesis panel | Training needs discussed with thesis panel | Presence at thesis panel and subsequent progress meeting | 1st year probationary report |
## POSTGRADUATE STRUCTURED MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR A 36 MONTH FULL-TIME PHD PROGRAMME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 2 Period</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Activities to achieve milestones</th>
<th>Training and development</th>
<th>Role of supervisory team</th>
<th>Reports and monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-18M</td>
<td>Renewed thesis plan</td>
<td>Review thesis plan based on 1st year review</td>
<td>Attend relevant training courses</td>
<td>Regular supervisory meetings</td>
<td>18M progress report (mid-year report)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop thesis chapters</td>
<td></td>
<td>Consider attending relevant conference/poster presentations</td>
<td>Support research process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18M-24M</td>
<td>Develop thesis chapters</td>
<td>Formal report submitted to thesis panel</td>
<td>Attend relevant training courses</td>
<td>Regular supervisory meetings</td>
<td>2nd year continuation report (annual progress report)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Consider attending relevant conference/poster presentations</td>
<td>Support research process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24M</td>
<td>Decision on continuation to 3rd year</td>
<td>2nd review meeting with thesis panel</td>
<td>Training needs discussed with thesis panel</td>
<td>Presence at thesis panel and subsequent progress meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NB: students are required to attend at least one UHI student conference during their registration period.*
### POSTGRADUATE STRUCTURED MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR A 36 MONTH FULL-TIME PHD PROGRAMME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 3 Period</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Activities to achieve milestones</th>
<th>Training and development</th>
<th>Role of supervisory team</th>
<th>Reports and monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24-30M</td>
<td>Renewed thesis plan to submission</td>
<td>Review thesis plan based on 2nd year review</td>
<td>Attend relevant training courses</td>
<td>Regular supervisory meetings</td>
<td>30M progress report (mid-year report)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Work on thesis chapters</td>
<td></td>
<td>Consider attending relevant conferences</td>
<td>Support research process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Submit paper for publication</td>
<td></td>
<td>Feedback on draft chapters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30M-36M</td>
<td>Develop thesis chapters</td>
<td>Thesis panel meeting (to consider progress towards submission)</td>
<td>Career development (careers advice, CV writing, job applications)</td>
<td>Regular supervisory meetings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finalise thesis</td>
<td>Notice of intention to submit thesis</td>
<td>External conference: oral presentation or poster</td>
<td>Feedback on draft chapters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Submit paper for publication</td>
<td></td>
<td>Identification of external and internal examiners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36M to completion</td>
<td>Submit PhD thesis</td>
<td>Viva training</td>
<td>Feedback on draft chapters</td>
<td></td>
<td>36M progress report (annual report)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Viva examination</td>
<td>Mock viva</td>
<td></td>
<td>Continuing 6 monthly progress reports until submission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# POSTGRADUATE STRUCTURED MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR A 60 MONTH PART-TIME PHD PROGRAMME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1-1.5</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Activities to achieve milestones</th>
<th>Training and development</th>
<th>Role of supervisory team</th>
<th>Reports and monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Period</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3M</td>
<td>Agree Research topic</td>
<td>Defining research area and identifying relevant literature</td>
<td>Training needs assessment (Introduction to Vitae Researcher Development Framework)</td>
<td>Regular discussions about scope of research</td>
<td>Introduction to third party monitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Formulate research rationale and begin literature review</td>
<td>Student AP induction (UHI induction at Oct or Mar)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3M-6M</td>
<td>Identification of preliminary research questions</td>
<td>Attend relevant training courses</td>
<td>1st progress report (6M report)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6M-12M</td>
<td>Develop preliminary thesis plan</td>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>Attend relevant training courses</td>
<td>Discuss research questions and early work on literature review</td>
<td>2nd progress report (annual report)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meet requirements for research ethical approval</td>
<td>Read UHI Research Ethics Framework and develop application for ethical approval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12M-18M</td>
<td>Complete full draft of literature review</td>
<td>1st review meeting with thesis panel</td>
<td>Attend relevant training courses</td>
<td>Provide comments on written material</td>
<td>1st probationary report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Decision on continuation</td>
<td></td>
<td>Training needs discussed with thesis panel</td>
<td>Presence at thesis panel and subsequent progress meeting</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### POSTGRADUATE STRUCTURED MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR A 60 MONTH PART-TIME PHD PROGRAMME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1.5-3</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Activities to achieve milestones</th>
<th>Training and development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Period</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NB: students are required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>to attend at least one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>UHI student conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>during their registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24M</td>
<td>Renewed thesis plan</td>
<td>Review thesis plan based on review</td>
<td>Attend relevant training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop thesis chapters</td>
<td></td>
<td>courses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Consider attending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>relevant conference/poster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>presentations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-30M</td>
<td>Develop thesis chapters</td>
<td></td>
<td>Regular supervisory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Support research process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-36M</td>
<td>Decision on continuation</td>
<td>Formal report submitted to thesis panel</td>
<td>Training needs discussed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>with thesis panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2nd review meeting with thesis</td>
<td></td>
<td>Regular supervisory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>panel</td>
<td></td>
<td>meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Presence at thesis panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and subsequent progress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4th progress report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(annual report)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5th progress report (mid-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>year report)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6th probationary report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(annual report)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Role of supervisory team**: Regular supervisory meetings, Support research process.
## Postgraduate Structured Management Framework for a 60 Month Part-Time PhD Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>3-5 Period</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Activities to achieve milestones</th>
<th>Training and development NB: students are required to attend at least one UHI student conference during their registration period.</th>
<th>Role of supervisory team</th>
<th>Reports and monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36-42M</td>
<td>Renewed thesis plan to submission</td>
<td>Review thesis plan based on 2nd review</td>
<td>Attend relevant training courses</td>
<td>Regular supervisory meetings Support research process Feedback on draft chapters</td>
<td>7th progress report (mid-year report)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop thesis chapters</td>
<td></td>
<td>Consider attending relevant conferences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42-48M</td>
<td>Develop thesis chapters</td>
<td></td>
<td>Attend relevant training courses</td>
<td>Regular supervisory meetings Support research process Feedback on draft chapters</td>
<td>8th progress report (annual report)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Consider attending relevant conferences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48-54M</td>
<td>Develop thesis chapters</td>
<td></td>
<td>Attend relevant training courses</td>
<td>Regular supervisory meetings Support research process Feedback on draft chapters</td>
<td>9th progress report (mid-year report)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Consider attending relevant conferences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54-60M</td>
<td>Develop thesis chapters</td>
<td>Thesis panel meeting (to consider progress towards submission)</td>
<td>Career development (careers advice, CV writing, job applications)</td>
<td>Regular supervisory meetings Feedback on draft chapters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Finalise thesis</td>
<td>Notice of intention to submit thesis</td>
<td>External conference: oral presentation or poster</td>
<td>Identification of external and internal examiners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Submit paper for publication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60M to completion</td>
<td>Submit PhD thesis</td>
<td>Viva training</td>
<td>Feedback on draft chapters</td>
<td>10th progress report (annual report)</td>
<td>Continuing 6 monthly progress reports until submission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Viva examination</td>
<td>Mock viva</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Postgraduate Structured Management Framework for a 12 Month Full-Time MRES Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 Period</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Activities to achieve milestones</th>
<th>Training and development</th>
<th>Role of supervisory team</th>
<th>Reports and monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-3M</td>
<td>Agree research topic</td>
<td>Defining research area and rationale</td>
<td>Training needs assessment (Introduction to Vitae Researcher Development Framework)</td>
<td>Decide timescale and format of supervisory meetings</td>
<td>1st progress report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Identification of research questions</td>
<td>Conduct literature review</td>
<td></td>
<td>Regular discussions about scope of research</td>
<td>Introduction to third party monitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development of methodology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Develop thesis plan</td>
<td>Read UHI Research Ethics Framework and develop application for ethical approval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Meet requirements for research ethical approval</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3M-6M</td>
<td>Develop thesis chapters</td>
<td>Attend relevant training courses</td>
<td>Regular supervisory meetings</td>
<td>Support research process</td>
<td>2nd progress report (mid-year report)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6M-12M</td>
<td>Completion of thesis chapters</td>
<td>Formal report submitted to thesis panel</td>
<td>Attend relevant training courses</td>
<td>Support research process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notice of intention to submit thesis</td>
<td></td>
<td>Career development (careers advice, CV writing, job applications)</td>
<td>Feedback on draft chapters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12M onwards</td>
<td>Continuing 6 monthly reports until submission</td>
<td>Viva training</td>
<td>Feedback on draft chapters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Submit thesis</td>
<td>Mock viva</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Viva examination</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NB:** Students are required to attend at least one UHI student conference during their registration period.
# POSTGRADUATE STRUCTURED MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR A 24 MONTH PART-TIME MRES PROGRAMME

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 1 Period</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
<th>Activities to achieve milestones</th>
<th>Training and development NB: students are required to attend at least one UHI student conference during their registration period.</th>
<th>Role of supervisory team</th>
<th>Reports and monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-6M</td>
<td>Agree research topic, Identification of research questions, Development of methodology, Develop thesis plan, Meet requirements for research ethical approval</td>
<td>Defining research area and rationale, Conduct literature review, Read UHI Research Ethics Framework and develop application for ethical approval</td>
<td>Training needs assessment (Introduction to Vitae Researcher Development Framework), Student induction at AP/UHI</td>
<td>Decide timescale and format of supervisory meetings, Regular discussions about scope of research</td>
<td>1st progress report, Introduction to third party monitor (mid-year report)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12M</td>
<td>Develop thesis chapters</td>
<td>Attend relevant training courses, Support research process, Presence at thesis panel and subsequent progress meeting</td>
<td>2nd progress report (annual report)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-18M</td>
<td>Develop thesis chapters</td>
<td>Review meeting with thesis panel, Training needs discussed with thesis panel, Support research process</td>
<td>Support research process, Presence at thesis panel and subsequent progress meeting</td>
<td>Probationary report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-24M</td>
<td>Notice of intention to submit thesis</td>
<td>Career development (careers advice, CV writing, job applications), Feedback on draft chapters, Identification of external and internal examiners</td>
<td>4th progress report (annual report)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24M onwards</td>
<td>Continuing 6 monthly reports until submission, Submit thesis, Viva examination</td>
<td>Viva training, Mock viva, Feedback on draft chapters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.2 Progress monitoring form

Progress monitoring forms are a formal record of the student’s progress and their generic skills training and it is fundamental that forms are completed and returned in a timely fashion, as close to the month the report is due as possible. The Graduate School Office manages the submission of the form and email submission requests are sent to the student and Director of Studies as reports are due.

These reports not only monitor progress but also offer the chance to feedback any relevant information to the Graduate School Office and RDC. The board of academics that make up the Graduate School Committee review submitted reports and provide students with feedback as necessary.

Reminders will be sent to students and supervisors when reports are overdue. Failure to submit a progress monitoring report within three months of the due date results in a reminder being sent to the student, Director of Studies and Principal of the Academic Partner. This reminder will request that the report be submitted within 7 days otherwise RDC may take the decision that the Director of Studies is deemed ineligible to supervise additional research students and that steps be taken to replace them for existing students.

4.2.3 Unsatisfactory progress

The following processes should be followed if it is deemed that the student is not making satisfactory progress:

**Stage 1 – Informal consideration** - where progress is indicated as unsatisfactory in the six monthly progress report, GSC will recommend that a meeting be convened between the student and the Director of Studies to discuss and resolve issues surrounding progress.

**Stage 2 – Initial warning** - when a supervisory team has decided that performance, or lack of attendance/contact, continues to be a problem and it is apparent from consideration of a progress report that progress is unsatisfactory, the student should be warned formally in writing by the Director of Studies that their performance and/or attendance is such that, if not improved, their registration may be terminated. This meeting should be convened by the Director of Studies and may include additional supervisors. The meeting will normally take the form of an interview within a stipulated timeframe.

A letter should immediately follow the warning to the student from the Director of Studies setting out dates when particular targets must be achieved by. It might also stipulate required attendance on specific training courses and details of support that might be provided, e.g. stipulate regular meetings with the supervisor(s).

A copy of this letter should be sent to the Graduate School Office who will place the letter on the student’s file and inform the Chair of RDC.

**Stage 3 – Formal RDC consideration** - If performance does not improve in line with the agreed targets, the Director of Studies should notify RDC, via the Graduate School Office, in writing, recommending that the student’s studies be terminated. Full details should be provided of the supervision and training provided to date, including reports of any meetings with the student to discuss progress, and details of the monitoring procedures applied.

RDC will be asked to consider the recommendation and will have access to all the relevant material. If RDC upholds the Director of Studies application to terminate the student’s registration, the student will be formally de-registered and informed in writing by the
Graduate School. The student would have the right to appeal this decision in line with Assessment Appeals Procedure – see Section 10 of this document for further information.

4.3 **SUPERVISION**

The supervision of PGR students is clearly personal in character and is influenced by many factors, including the personalities involved and the environment in which the students and supervisors work. It is also understood that there will also be considerable variations in supervisory practice between disciplines.

For these reasons this document does not attempt to describe in exact detail the academic role of the supervisor. Rather it aims to identify those aspects of good supervisory practice that are common to all disciplines, and to define the respective responsibilities of supervisors and students.

4.3.1 **The supervisory team**

Each student will have a principal supervisor – referred to as the Director of Studies - who will normally be a paid employee of UHI, and one or two further supervisors depending on the scope of the project.

The supervisory team should comprise at least two demonstrably active researchers, one of whom to be designated as the main supervisor with overall responsibility for the student (the director of studies).

There should be no more than 3 supervisors in each supervisory team unless there are exceptional circumstances for more being required.

At least one supervisor should have knowledge, skills and experience in the area of the student's project: where one of the supervisors does not have such knowledge, skills and experience, he/she must have knowledge, skills and experience in at least some, preferably complementary, areas directly related to the student's project.

It is expected that at least two supervisors within the supervisory team should possess a PhD. The Research Degrees Committee is permitted to waive this criterion on an exceptional basis, if the proposed supervisor has relevant experience and expertise and held other relevant qualifications: in such cases, e.g. where the main supervisor, exceptionally, did not hold a PhD, at least one other member of the Supervisory Team must hold a PhD and must provide direct supervisory support to the research student.

The Director of Studies should normally have had experience of at least one successful supervision (defined as taking a student through to completion of a research degree award) within a supervisory team. Where the director of studies does not have such experience, supervision must be provided by a supervisory team comprising at least one demonstrably active researcher with experience of at least two successful students.

Academic staff of other Higher Education Institutions can be appointed as members of supervisory teams in order to fulfil the above criteria, but should not be appointed as the Director of Studies.

4.3.2 **Contact between students and supervisors**

It is the responsibility of supervisors to maintain regular contact with the student through supervisory meetings and maintaining reasonable accessibility so that advice may be offered at other times. It
is the responsibility of the student to agree a schedule of meetings with their supervisor and thereafter attend these meetings.

While the amount of contact between a student and supervisors will vary depending on the academic area and also on the stage of the student’s studies, it is expected that there should normally be, as a minimum, one formal, minuted supervisory meeting once a month with informal meetings held more frequently, as and when required.

There is no expectation that the meeting should be face to face and can be by remote means (e.g. video conference, telephone, e-mail, Skype) as appropriate. It is expected that not less than nine meetings take place on an annual basis, one of which should include all supervisors, again using remote means if appropriate.

The student should take brief written notes of formal meetings and both student and supervisors should agree that the notes are an accurate record of the meeting.

4.3.3 Absence of supervisor

The academic area must make arrangements for maintaining the supervision of research postgraduate students whenever a supervisor is absent. RDC should be informed if the Director of Studies is to be absent.

4.4 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SUPERVISORY TEAM

Supervisors are expected to assist research students throughout their period of supervised research and for up to twelve months thereafter during the writing-up period or to completion if sooner. They are not normally obliged to act as supervisors after this period except when a thesis has been examined and referred for resubmission, in which case the supervisor is obliged to provide advice until the specified date for resubmission.

The generally accepted responsibilities of a supervisor are outlined as follows:

4.4.1 Admission

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

4.4.2 Quality Assurance

- Familiarity with regulations governing research degrees.
- Attendance at regular supervisor training courses.
- Compliance with the requirements of the postgraduate structured management framework in relation to the training, supervision and monitoring of the research student.
- Submission of timely progress reports for consideration by RDC and to meet with the student where the student is deemed as ‘not satisfactory’ with regard to progress.
- Assurance that their workload is such as to allow adequate time to be given to supervised students.
- Advising RDC of any lack of resources, which may prevent the student from completing their study within the period of study.
- Advising on extensions of study or suspension of study as appropriate.
4.4.3 Induction

- Give guidance about planning the research programme, about literature and sources, and about requisite skills.
- Ensuring that the research student has the opportunity to become acquainted with all relevant safety regulations and procedures, and receives appropriate training and supervision when following any course of action or using any technique that might be deemed hazardous or dangerous.
- Should direct students to appropriate sources of welfare advice where required, and if necessary advise that the student contact the academic partner's Student Support Services.
- Ensure that reasonable adjustments are made to the study environment if required.
- Ensure that a student from overseas has the necessary linguistic and other skills to ensure effective use of their time and experience, and take steps to assist those in need of support to obtain appropriate help.
- Undertake the UHI Ethics Reflection and Practice Module available in Blackboard, and thereafter provide information and guidance to students during their application for ethical approval.

4.4.4 During the research degree programme

- Maintain regular contact through supervisory meetings (by electronic means if the student is off-campus).
- Maintain reasonable accessibility so that advice may be offered at other times, and arrange an alternative when away for protracted periods.
- Review written work and other outputs on a regular basis as appropriate.
- Return such work with constructive criticism within a time period to be agreed with the student that does not impede the student’s progress.
- Work collaboratively with other supervisors when involved in a supervisory team.
- Agree notes of formal meetings with the student.
- Give detailed advice about completion dates, and about pacing of work (it is expected that students will normally submit their thesis within their period of registration).
- Advise on other members of staff or experts in the field whom the student might consult.
- Arrange as appropriate for the student to present work to graduate seminars, staff seminars and conferences.
- Explain best research practice and ethical considerations as early as possible in the student’s studies.
- Advise on ethical issues relating to the conduct of the research (including how to obtain the approval of relevant ethics committees if appropriate).
- Advise on honest and fair dealing with the work of others quoted or paraphrased in the written work of the student.
- Consult with the student on the appropriate recognition of the student’s contribution to research publications, taking into account current policy on Intellectual Property Rights.
- Ensure that the student has adequate opportunities to become aware of the standards required, and the standards being attained.
- Advise on whether and when a student should request a transfer to a higher degree (e.g. MRes to PhD).
- Advise whenever progress or standards of work are below what are generally expected and the implications of unsatisfactory progress (e.g. transfer to a lower degree or termination of studies).

4.4.5 Skills training

- Determine what training in research methods, skills and further education in the subject are required by the student.
• Undertake a skills audit with the student at the beginning of their programme of study, and annually thereafter throughout their prescribed period of study to determine the student’s research, transferable and generic skills requirements.
• Ensure that the student has access to the required skills training and development opportunities and agree with the student a programme of skills training.

4.4.6 Completion

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

4.5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RESEARCH STUDENT

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

The generally accepted responsibilities of a student are outlined as follows:

4.5.1 Progress monitoring

• Be familiar with the requirements of the Postgraduate Structured Management Framework and discuss these with their supervisory team as appropriate.
• Discuss the progress monitoring reports with their supervisory team and counter-sign as appropriate.
• Aid the submission of progress reports within stipulated timeframes to the Graduate School Office.
• If deemed as ‘not satisfactory’ with regard to progress, meet with the Director of Studies to seek a resolution.
• Recognise that, although UHI aims to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for the conduct of research studies by postgraduate students, from time to time students will encounter academic problems and difficulties. In the first instance they should raise them with their Director of Studies and supervisory team, but if this is not appropriate they should contact their third party monitor and if this does not lead to a solution then they should contact the Graduate School Office.
• Accept that when a student’s research interests diverge from what they originally intended, it might be appropriate to be allocated to a new supervisor; again the correct approach is to discuss the situation with the current Director of Studies, then the Graduate School Office if necessary.

4.5.2 Admission

• Maintain their enrolment status by registering at the start of their studies with UHI and continue to do so annually even if studying off-campus or part-time.
• Define the area of their research in consultation with their supervisory team.
• Agree a research topic with their supervisory team as soon as practicable.
• Ensure that they have understood the guidelines on good research practice.
• Ensure that they have completed a training needs analysis within a month of admission.
• Ensure that they are thoroughly acquainted with all relevant safety regulations and procedures, and have received training before following any course of action or using any technique which might be deemed hazardous or dangerous.

4.5.3 During the research degree process

• Agree a timetable for the conduct of their research.
• Maintain progress in accordance with the plan agreed with their supervisor.
• Agree a schedule of meetings with their supervisory team, write up notes of these meetings and agree them with their supervisors.
• Discuss work and progress with their supervisory team.
• Submit written work as and when required by their supervisory team.
• Keep a written record of their work in a research notebook that can be reviewed.
• Take the initiative with their supervisory team in defining and raising problems or difficulties
• Attend courses as specified in training needs analysis with the agreement of their Director of Studies and UHI regulations.
• Agree with their supervisory team a plan and timetable for the writing of the thesis.
• Refer to Blackboard and circulated training information regularly.
• Arrange as appropriate, in liaison with other students opportunities to host research training events or seminars within the hosting Academic Partner.
• Attend the Graduate School led annual student conference regularly (and at least once) throughout studies.
• International students must maintain awareness of - and adhere to - the immigration rules. Failure to comply with rules risks the student status, and may result in an adverse UK immigration record and being asked to leave the UK.

4.5.4 Ethics

• Discuss the proposed research area with the Director of Studies and obtain timely approval of their research from the UHI Research Ethics Committee (REC) and / or Faculty Research Ethics Committee (FREC) where appropriate.
• Consult with their supervisor on the appropriate recognition of their contribution to research publications in accordance with the policy on Intellectual Property Rights.

4.5.5 Skills training

• Define their training and educational needs and discuss them with their supervisory team, as part of personal development planning.
• Undertake, with their supervisory team, a skills audit at the beginning of their programme of study, and annually thereafter throughout their prescribed period of study to determine research, transferable and generic skills requirements.
• Attend a programme of skills training as agreed with their Director of Studies.

4.5.6 Completion

• Be aware that their thesis is their own work and responsibility.
• Accept that, while their supervisory team will give advice, constructive feedback and other guidance, they must take ultimate responsibility for the final version of their thesis.
• Decide whether or not to accept any advice or suggestions given by the supervisory team.
- Decide when to give notice of intention to submit, taking due account of the Director of Studies’ opinion.
- Present the final draft of their thesis to their supervisory team.
- Ensure timely submission of the thesis for examination.
- Seek advice on preparation for the oral examination.

4.6 CHANGES TO THE SUPERVISORY TEAM

Certain circumstances may require a change to the supervisory team originally agreed, for example if a member of the team has left the University, or the focus of the project had changed.

The Academic Partner, in discussion and agreement with a suitable representative from the supervisory team, must arrange the change of supervision in sufficient time to effect a smooth handover. Once new members of the team have been identified a Change of Supervisor Form should be completed and submitted to RDC for approval.

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

If a change is agreed, a Change of Supervisor Form should be completed and submitted to RDC for approval.

4.7 SKILLS TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

4.7.1 Personal development

The acquisition and development of personal transferable, employment-related and generic research skills is an important part of postgraduate research training.

All postgraduate research students must undertake a skills audit at the beginning of their programme of study and annually thereafter, to determine research, transferable and generic skills requirements. This should then be reported through the progress monitoring process.

Supervisors may require students to attend taught courses relating specifically to their research training and development, which may be stipulated as a condition of entry or as part of their ongoing skills development.

4.7.2 University-wide training and external events

Postgraduate research students can access a variety of training courses through UHI, the University of Edinburgh, the Scottish Graduate Schools for Arts and Humanities, and Social Science (SGSAH, SGSSS) NHS etc. Details of courses and training provided can be found in the events calendar located in the PGR area of Blackboard. Details of training events are also circulated via email as and when they become available.

4.7.3 UHI research conference and training fund

Enrolled postgraduate research students (both full and part-time) may be eligible to apply for financial support to attend external conference or training events through the University’s research
conference and training fund. Details on eligibility, exclusions and how to apply can be found in the fees/funding section of PGR/Blackboard.

If travel insurance is required to attend an event, it may be possible to arrange this through the host Academic Partner finance office.

4.7.4 Paid work for teaching

Postgraduate research students may be given opportunities to be involved in the teaching responsibilities of their host location. It should be noted that, in accordance with national guidelines, no more than six hours per week should be undertaken as teaching.

ALPINE (Accredited Learning, Professional development and Innovation in Education) is co-ordinated through the Universities Learning and Teaching Academy and is open to any colleagues who deliver, support or lead the development of HE-level learning and teaching. Please see here for further details https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/learning-and-teaching-academy/alpine/
SECTION 5 - CHANGE IN STUDENT CIRCUMSTANCES

While the University registers students under specific terms for their course of study and believes that periods of study under the regulations are sufficient in most circumstances for students to complete their degrees or programmes, it also understands that circumstances may arise during the student journey that may require alterations to this.

It is essential to ensure that an application to change any aspect of a research student’s registration is made to RDC before the proposed change commences. This is particularly important in the case of suspensions and extensions as retrospective suspension applications cannot be considered.

5.1 CHANGE TO MODE OF STUDY OR DEGREE

Students wishing to move from full-time to part-time study or vice versa – or change their degree - should discuss this with their Director of Studies in the first instance.

Applications should be made to the Graduate School Office via a Change in Mode of Study or Degree Form. All applications for changes in mode of study must be supported by the Director of Studies and approved by RDC.

International students on Tier 4 visas may only study full-time.

Any change from full to part-time study, or vice versa, will have an effect on the tuition fees charged each year. Research Degrees Committee considers requests to change mode of study and if approval is given any re-calculation of fees will be managed by your Academic Partner Finance Office.

5.2 SUSPENSION OF STUDIES

During periods where students are unable to make progress with their studies due to medical or other exceptional circumstance, they may apply to suspend their studies for up to 12 months in a single application. The maximum amount of time that may be suspended is 24 months.

Students should note that there is a distinction between suspending studies and an extension (see below). A suspension can only be taken when a student is not engaged in work towards their degree. If a student continues to be engaged in work towards their degree, then a suspension in studies will not be appropriate.

Suspensions involve the deletion of a period for when a student would otherwise have been studying for a degree. The deleted period is discounted when calculating time limit for a degree or programme. A suspension is most commonly granted to cover a period of illness when a research student is unable to study, or if a research student has to take a period of full-time paid employment, which is unrelated to their studies. Suspensions will normally only be agreed for up to 12 months and cannot be applied retrospectively.

5.2.1 Applying for a suspension

Applications to suspend study should be made via a Suspension of Studies Form and must be accompanied by evidence such as medical certificates where applicable. All applications for suspension must be made a soon as possible, before commencing a period of suspension and it
should be noted that retrospective suspensions are not normally permitted. A request to suspend must be supported by the Director of Studies before being passed to RDC for final approval.

5.2.2 Sponsors

It is the responsibility of the student to keep any sponsor informed of the reasons for requesting a suspension or for obtaining suspension approval. This is particularly important for a student who is funded by one of the Research Councils who expect doctoral students to have completed within four years of full-time study. Funded students should include with their suspension request form confirmation that approval has been sought from their funding body, where applicable.

5.2.3 International (Tier 4) students

International students studying at UHI on a Tier 4 visa should refer to and abide by the terms of their visa when requesting a suspension of studies. Students should note that they might be required to leave the UK during a period of suspension and the associated impact on visa length this may have.

5.3 EXTENSIONS AND REDUCTIONS

Extensions can be granted up to a maximum of 12 months in a single application. The maximum amount of extension time that may be granted is 24 months, however no extension will normally be approved that results in a thesis being submitted beyond the permitted maximum periods of study – see Section 4.1.

Students submitting an extension request following completion of their standard period of study must be able to demonstrate evidence of progress in their research and make clear the feasibility of submitting their thesis within the period of extension being sought.

5.3.1 Extension to period of study

It is expected that research students will normally submit their thesis by the end of their extended period of study. Tuition fees are not payable during this extension period although a continuation fee will be charged for any agreed extension period in each academic year.

Applications to extend study should be made to RDC via an Application for Extension to Study Form. Completed applications must include a thesis plan giving target dates for the completion of each chapter, and be supported by the Director of Studies before being passed to RDC for final approval.

5.3.2 Sponsors

Students funded by one of the UK Research Councils, or other funding bodies, should note that they must comply with the requirement of their funding body in regards to the length of period of study and deadline for submission of thesis. It is the expectation of Research Councils that full-time PhD students funded by them should submit their thesis for examination within four years of starting their programme of research. Therefore any extension request must be approved by the relevant Research Council in addition to having the approval of RDC. It is the responsibility of the student and the Director of Studies to keep the Research Council informed of any delays in submission.
5.3.3 International (Tier 4) students

International students studying at UHI on a Tier 4 visa should refer to and abide by the terms of their visa when requesting to extend studies. If a visa extension is required the Graduate School Office will be able to assist the student in regard to their application.

5.3.4 Examples of extension circumstances

- Serious physical or mental illness of the student.
- Death/serious illness of a partner, close family member or close friend.
- Unforeseeable or unpreventable events such as distress or injury caused by a serious accident; the effects of being a victim of a criminal act or the distress or serious disruption caused by fire, flood or other natural catastrophe.
- Serious personal problems such as relationship problems, family crises.
- Unexpected changes to the student’s source of funding (NB: students must ensure that they have the necessary funds before embarking on their degree).
- Breakdown of essential equipment where a student is unable to continue research and the use of alternative equipment is not possible.
- Delays in obtaining ethical approval where approval has been sought in good time.
- Jury service; military service.
- Maternity or adoption leave.
- Delays in progress due to unforeseen problems with the degree programme and/or working environment (e.g. moving of offices/buildings, supervisor(s) changes and unavailability etc.), which are outside of the student’s control. (Note: the problem must be reported to RDC and the Graduate School Office at the time it occurs).
- Study leave necessary for the degree programme (other than official leave of absence for study at an approved institution or fieldwork).
- Internship/work placement necessary for the degree programme.

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

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

The final decision on whether a suspension or an extension is granted or not is at the discretion of RDC.
5.3.5 Reduction to period of study

Students registered on a PhD may make an application to RDC for an exceptional period of study less than the standard period stipulated in Section 4.1, provided that:

- No application to reduce the period of study may be submitted until a thesis is submitted for examination;
- For full-time students the period shall not be reduced to less than 24 months (PhD) or 12 months (MPhil);
- For part-time students the period shall not be reduced to less than 36 months (PhD) or 24 months (MPhil).

Applications will not be considered until the thesis has been submitted for examination.

5.4 MRES WITH TAUGHT COMPONENT

Taught modules being studied with an MRes programme will be subject to the normal regulations and procedures associated with that module, including mitigating circumstances procedures.

5.5 WITHDRAWAL AND TERMINATION

5.5.1 Withdrawal initiated by student

Where possible, students should discuss their intention to withdraw with the Director of Studies in the first instance. Please also see information here.

Applications to withdraw from study should be made to the Graduate School Office via a ‘Withdrawal form’ - with the date of withdrawal normally being the date the form is received by RDC. Withdrawals will not normally be applied retrospectively.

5.5.2 Termination initiated by the University

The termination of a student’s registration may be applied at any time provided there is sufficient reason, for example, unsatisfactory progress – see section 4.2. Students may appeal their exclusion or termination of registration through the University’s assessment appeals procedure, section 18.

5.5.3 Tuition fees

At the discretion of the University, a refund of tuition fees may be made to students who withdraw from a programme with appropriate academic approval. Any refund due will be calculated pro rata from the approved withdrawal date. Please refer to the University fees policy.

5.5.4 International (Tier 4) students

Students on a Tier 4 visa may be required to leave the country once they withdraw from their studies. If a student is no longer registered at the University, the University can no longer sponsor them to remain in the UK and will report any withdrawal or termination of registration to UK Visa and Immigration for follow up.
SECTION 6 - THE RESEARCH THESIS

6.1 GENERAL GUIDANCE ON WRITING THE THESIS

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

In addition to advice from supervisory teams, students should read other UK thesis in their area – these are available through the British Library’s Electronic Theses Online Service (EThOS). Further information is available here.

The thesis is expected to form a coherent whole, with a consistent argument or series of arguments running through it (or discipline specific equivalent). The incorporation of material published by the student during the period of registration for the degree is permitted, but it must be accompanied by written commentary on publications submitted. Furthermore, the footnoting/endnoting must make clear which sections of the thesis are based on published material and how much individual responsibility the student has for any jointly authored work. Such material must be properly and stylistically incorporated into the thesis.

6.2 WORD COUNT AND LANGUAGE

All theses must be submitted in English unless a research degree in Gaelic is being undertaken and this was indicated at the point of initial application.

6.2.1 Thesis submitted in English

UHI regulations specify maximum lengths for a thesis written in English, which must not be exceeded except with special permission from RDC:

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

6.2.2 Thesis submitted in Gaelic

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

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

It should be noted that these figures are intended only as an approximate guide to maximum lengths. They include appendices and footnotes, but not bibliographies, statistical and computational compilations and analogous illustrative material (maps, facsimile documents etc).
Any data compilation can be separate from this and stored in a way consistent with the good research practice and current legislation.

The above word-counts are upper word limits and you are encouraged to do a final word count. If a thesis word count is 10% above the word limit students must apply to RDC, via the Graduate School Office, in advance of submission to gain permission to submit an over length thesis. This application should include a short explanation of why the word count is to be exceeded alongside written support from the students’ Director of Studies. Unless approval to exceed the prescribed limit has been obtained by RDC a thesis cannot be sent for examination.

6.3 PRESENTATION

The following rules apply to the required format of thesis submissions for all research degrees. These rules are the same for the thesis submitted for examination and the final bound version, submitted after your viva, however there are additional rules about the binding of the final version – please see section 6.6.

The thesis must be presented in the following format:

- be in A4 format (unless approved by the Research Degrees Committee in advance)
- be in a permanent, legible typescript or print. The recommended font is Times New Roman or Arial and the recommended text font-size is 12-point.
- be printed single sided on good quality white paper and within the range 70 g/m2 to 100 g/m2.
- have a margin of at least 40mm at the left-hand binding edge of the page. All other margins must be at least 15 mm
- use double or one-and-a-half line spacing for the main text. For indented quotations and footnotes you may use single spacing
- have pages numbered consecutively throughout the main text, including any whole-page diagrams or illustrations
- include a title page specifying:
  - the full title of the thesis
  - the full name of the author (the student). Please capitalise the surname/family name
  - a statement that the thesis is being submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University for the appropriate award (e.g. This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the University of the Highlands and Islands for the degree of xxx)
  - the name of any formally approved collaborating establishments or funding bodies (e.g. This research programme was carried out in collaboration with xxx / funded by xxx / funded as part of the xxx programme (if any)
  - the month and year of submission (for examination copies only, final submission copies must contain the month and year of award – please contact the Graduate School if you are unsure of the award year. For resubmissions this should be the month and year of resubmission)
incorporate: an abstract of around 300 words stating the nature and scope of the work undertaken and contribution made to knowledge of the subject; a contents page; a statement of objectives (this can be part of the introduction if you wish); a reference list or bibliography

not contain any material that has been previously submitted for an award at an institute of Higher Education either in the UK or overseas. The student must confirm this in the Submission of Thesis for Examination Form (for UHI awards) or Thesis deposit declaration and checklist Form (for University of Aberdeen awards);

acknowledge if you have published material from your thesis in advance of examination or where you are submitting publications or other materials as part of your thesis submission. In such cases, copies of the published material should either be bound in with the thesis or may be placed in a pocket at the end.

It is customary to include acknowledgments to individuals and organisations that have assisted you in your research, including your Director of Studies and/or Supervisory Team.

The thesis should be organised in the following format:

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

6.4 SUBMISSION FOR EXAMINATION

6.4.1 Intention to submit

Students should inform the Graduate School Office of their intention to submit their thesis by completing an ‘intention to submit’ form at least two months before the intended submission date. This alerts the Graduate School Office to the need to ensure that a suitable examination panel is in place for examination. If the intention to submit form is not submitted prior to submission of the thesis there may be a delay in the thesis being sent out for examination whilst examiners are appointed.

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

If your submission deadline falls on a Saturday or Sunday or Bank Holiday, or during the Christmas closure period, submission will be accepted on the next working day after the deadline.
Students who fail to submit before the end of their approved period of study (will be automatically withdrawn)

6.4.2 Students submitting late without approved extension

A student will not be permitted to register after their period of supervised study is completed without an approved extension – for which a continuation fee is charged. However, students may submit a thesis for examination if they are still within the maximum period of study for their degree but have not been granted an extension. In such cases, if a thesis is accepted for examination, a reinstatement fee is charged.

6.4.3 Students who fail to submit before end of approved study

A student who fails to submit before the end of their approved period of study (which includes any periods of approved extension) will be automatically withdrawn and will not be permitted to submit after that time. A student may apply to RDC to be reinstated in order to submit and if, exceptionally, reinstatement is approved the thesis will be examined subject to payment of a reinstatement fee.

6.4.4 What to submit (examination)

- At least two copies of the thesis (the number of copies will depend on the number of examiners appointed to the examination team);
- Submission of Thesis for Examination Form (for UHI award) or Thesis Deposit Declaration and Checklist Form (for University of Aberdeen award) – these are formal declarations and should be read carefully.

The thesis should be ‘soft-bound’ – this should not be a ring or spring binder. Spiral or perfect binding is recommended as it allows amendments to be incorporated before the examined thesis is permanently bound. For larger theses, work may be split into two volumes. In such cases, volume one should contain a full table of contents (covering both volumes) and volume two should contain a table of contents listing the chapters contained in volume two.

6.4.5 Where to submit (examination)

UHI Graduate School Office
University of the Highlands and Islands
Bryden Lodge
Ness Walk
Inverness IV3 5SQ

No additions or amendments may be made to a thesis after it has been submitted and before the examination has been held and a thesis may not be retrieved from the Graduate School Office once it has been submitted.

6.5 SUBMISSION OF FINAL, HARD-BOUND THESIS

Conferment of award is dependent on the submission of one permanently bound copy of the thesis, incorporating any corrections required by the examiners, together with a non-editable pdf version.

A bound copy of the final, approved version of the thesis must be submitted, after the examiners’ recommendation of award has been approved by RDC. This will be held in the Institution’s library.
(for University of Aberdeen awards) or the Academic Partner library (for UHI awards) and made available to readers on request as a reference document.

The bound copy must be identical in format to those submitted for examination, except that:

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

A pdf copy of the final, approved version of the thesis must be submitted to the University. This will be uploaded to the University’s Research Database PURE which stores information relating to research and associated activities from across UHI and makes postgraduate research theses publically accessible.

In addition your thesis will also be available on the British Library UK thesis database (online service EThOS) which lists all doctoral theses awarded by UK higher education institutions, by harvesting information from our PURE research database.

6.5.1 What to submit (final version)

- One hard bound copy of the thesis
- A non-editable pdf copy of the thesis
- Final Submission Form (for UHI award) or Thesis Deposit Declaration and Checklist Form (for University of Aberdeen award) - hard copy form only, soft copy cannot be accepted.

6.5.2 Where to submit (final version)

For University of Aberdeen award:

The bound copy, form and pdf copy on cd-rom can be submitted in person to the Infohub, or to the Registry, via post to:

Registry
The Hub
University of Aberdeen
Elphinstone Road
Aberdeen AB24 3TU

Additionally, a pdf copy should also be uploaded to UHI drop-box or emailed as a compressed zip file to: gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk
For UHI award:

The **bound copy** and form should be submitted in person, or by post to:

UHI Graduate School Office  
University of the Highlands and Islands  
Bryden Lodge  
Ness Walk  
Inverness   IV3 5SQ

The **pdf copy** can be uploaded to UHI drop-box or emailed as a compressed zip file to: gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk

6.6 **THESIS EMBARGO**

**IMPORTANT:** The following embargo information applies only to research students registered for a University of the Highlands and Islands award. Students registered for a University of Aberdeen award who wish to apply for a thesis embargo should, in the first instance, contact the Graduate School Office.

It is the University’s intention to store all postgraduate research thesis (MRes, MSc, MLitt, MPhil and PhD) in electronic and print format to support the appropriate dissemination of research material by electronic means. Students and their supervisors should therefore think carefully about the copyright and intellectual property right consequences of their work from the outset and students who think an embargo is necessary are encouraged to discuss this with their supervisors as early as possible.

In a very small number of cases it may be necessary, following examination, to formally restrict access to a thesis. Where needed, this can be done by placing the thesis under an embargo.

**6.6.1 Types of embargo**

Restrictions will normally apply to the electronic version of the thesis only (a partial embargo). Where there are very good reasons for doing so, approval may be given for an embargo applying to both the print version and the electronic version (a full embargo).

The embargo period is normally quite short and in most cases an embargo period of no more than twelve months is sufficient. In some cases it may be appropriate to approve a longer embargo period. The maximum embargo period is normally two years from the date the research degree was awarded.

Over the embargo period access to the thesis will be restricted according to the terms approved by the University:

- if a full embargo has been approved, there will be no public access to the electronic and print versions of the thesis over the embargo period and no online catalogue record ("metadata") relating to the thesis; the thesis may be consulted by the Supervisors and/or Head of Academic Partner;

- if a partial embargo has been approved, the thesis will not be made available through the University’s PURE online repository but it will be available for public reference in the relevant Academic Partner library and there will be an online catalogue record.

Following the end of the approved embargo period, the thesis will automatically be made available publically in the normal way.
If the thesis has been funded by an organisation then the funder may have Open Access requirements that will need to be considered before requesting an embargo. For example: if funded by Research Councils UK (AHRC; BBSRC; EPSRC; ESRC; MRC; NERC; STFC) then the requirement is that the thesis should be available open access within 12 months of the award.

A partial or full embargo of a thesis can be requested for a set period of time, which will not normally exceed two years from the date the research degree was awarded. Any embargo must have the support of the Director of Studies and will need to be approved by Research Degrees Committee through the Graduate School processes.

6.6.2 When is an embargo needed?

Examples of when an embargo might be considered include:
- Commercial sensitivity or exploitation
- Patent pending
- National security issues
- Individual’s personal safety issues
- 3rd party copyright issue
- Publication issues / intent to publish

If paper thesis restriction is also required, the restriction must meet legislative requirements (Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and/or the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations (2004)).

6.6.3 Applying for an embargo

UHI award - A Request to Embargo Thesis Form should be submitted to the Graduate School for approval by RDC.

Students registered for a University of Aberdeen award who wish to apply for a thesis embargo should, in the first instance, contact the Graduate School Office.

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

The form must be countersigned by the Director of Studies to indicate that the request has their support.

You may choose to also supply documentary evidence to support the request, which might include:
- a letter from the research sponsor/collaborating organisation or body confirming that the thesis contains research of commercial sensitivity
- a copy of a confidentiality agreement showing that research participants had taken part under the condition that access to the thesis would be restricted
- a letter from a prospective publisher showing that they would consider publishing works deriving from the thesis only if access to the thesis is restricted

6.6.4 Extending an embargo period

Requests to extend the original embargo period should be made in writing to the Graduate School Office. The request must be made at least 8 weeks before the end of the embargo period and must be supported by an explanation as to why the extension is required.
SECTION 7 – EXAMINATION

Examination is by independent assessment of a thesis by individual examiners followed by oral examination – viva voce - by a panel of examiners. Examiners will often come to the oral examination with certain doubts; one of the functions of the oral is to allow the student to explain, expand and justify their thesis.

7.1 NOMINATION AND APPOINTMENT OF EXAMINERS

A Nomination of Examiners Form should be submitted to the Graduate School Office by the Director of Studies prior to submission of the thesis. By doing this it is anticipated that examiners will be appointed by the time the thesis is submitted and it can be sent out for examination straight away. Examiners are approved by RDC.

7.2 REQUIREMENTS FOR EXAMINERS

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

For University of Aberdeen award: Normally one internal examiner and one external examiner are nominated.

For all awards, if a student is a full or part-time member of UHI academic staff, at least two external examiners must be appointed in addition to an independent internal chair who is appointed to be responsible for overseeing the arrangements for the examination, and, in particular, for ensuring that policies and procedures are followed. Note that, when a student is employed by the University as a Research Assistant or Research Fellow, two external examiners are not required.

In identifying examiners, Directors of Studies are expected to indicate reasons for proposing the external examiner. Any contact between a student and the nominated external examiner during the student’s career should be indicated.

In submitting nominations, the following should be adhered to:

- An internal examiner (and, for UHI award, an internal chair) should be appointed for all research degrees examined by thesis. In those instances where it is necessary for two or more external examiners to be appointed e.g. when the student is a member of academic staff, the internal chair’s responsibility is to oversee the examination and, in particular, to ensure that standard University procedures and policies are followed;

- A student’s supervisor (past or present) cannot be appointed as an internal examiner;

- A former member of staff who has left UHI since a student completed his/her research may be appointed as an internal examiner and offered the same fee as an external examiner;

- In all other cases an internal examiner or internal chair must be contracted employees of the UHI (excluding honorary members of staff);

- Where the examiners appointed do not include a contracted employee of UHI, the internal chair should oversee the examination arrangements;
• Directors of Study should identify on the nomination form those theses where confidentiality might appropriately apply. As part of the appointment process, Graduate School will draw the attention of the external examiner to this matter. It is expected that the imposition of confidentiality restrictions would only be used exceptionally;

• Examiners are aware that they are being nominated and their availability for examination of the thesis checked.

7.2.1 The examiners

Examiners are required to prepare independent written reports on their assessment of the thesis on an independent report form. These must be prepared independently before the day of the oral examination by the examiners, who must also read each other’s reports prior to the examination. They may be exchanged beforehand or brought to the examination, as may be convenient.

Assessing the quality of the thesis is the most important of the examiners’ functions. The standards to be attained for each degree require that:

• For doctoral degrees - the thesis makes a distinct and original contribution to knowledge in the discipline and contains work which is considered to be worthy of publication;

• For the degree of MPhil - the thesis makes a contribution to knowledge, affords evidence of originality and demonstrates application of independent research;

• For Masters degree - the thesis displays evidence of originality or is a satisfactory, orderly and critical exposition of existing knowledge within the field concerned. Research Masters degrees can also be awarded with Distinction on the unanimous recommendation of the examiners if they judge the thesis to be of outstanding quality overall in terms of presentation, and other attributes including, for example, source discovery and interpretation, literature review, scholarly analysis, originality and/or contribution to knowledge.

In applying these standards the examiners should bear in mind what can properly be achieved in the one, two or three years of full-time work (or part-time equivalents) which is required for the various degrees. Further, no thesis can be approved unless the thesis meets acceptable standards in the use of English, in quotation and citation, and in presentation. Examiners should also pay appropriate attention to the student’s use of evidence (the student’s formal declaration that the work has been composed by him or herself) and that it is a record of work that has been done by him or herself.

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

7.2.2 The oral examination/viva

The oral examination is an integral part of the assessment for the degree, and is not to be regarded as a mere formality by either the student or the examiners. The oral is the culmination of the process of examination, and both student and examiners must recognise it as an occasion of central importance.

The primary function of the oral examination is to allow the student to explain, expand, defend and justify their thesis, in response to the examiners’ questions. In addition the student should demonstrate through a discussion of the thesis, its arguments and its evidence, and in response to
the examiners’ questions, that the thesis is their own work, and that they have a general knowledge and understanding of the field of study.

All students for the award of a research degree are required to submit to oral examination unless there are exceptional reasons why the oral examination should be dispensed with. In such cases, the exceptional reasons for dispensing with the oral examination must be given on the examiners' reports and be approved by RDC (for UHI award) or Quality Assurance Committee (for University of Aberdeen award). The oral examination will normally take place only when a thesis is first submitted. Where a thesis has been re-submitted, a second oral examination will be held only if RDC approves a proposal to that effect, normally on the recommendation of the examiners.

7.2.3 **Arrangements and the conduct of the oral examination**

The internal examiner is normally responsible for arranging the oral examination and will contact the external and the student shortly after receipt of the thesis to arrange a date which must be mutually convenient to all the examiners and the student – examiners are asked that the viva be scheduled within two months of receipt of the thesis, however delays in scheduling can happen, depending on availability.

The internal examiner should keep the student and the Graduate School Office informed if there is to be any delay in arranging a date for the oral examination (e.g. due to the external examiner being unavailable).

The student must not contact the examiners outwith the oral examination – this is to maintain the independence of the exam panel.

Oral examinations normally take place at one of the Academic Partner colleges of UHI or at Executive Office of UHI, but may be held elsewhere or by video conference or similar method by the mutual agreement of the examination panel and student. The room in which the examination is being held should be free from external interruptions including the telephone, and relatively free from obtrusive noise.

The student, the examiners, and the internal chair are normally the only persons who may be present at the oral. A member of the supervisory team may attend the oral examination as an observer on the agreement of the examination panel and student.

The examiners may read each other’s independent reports only when they are completed, and thereafter, either in advance of the oral, or immediately preceding the oral. Prior to the oral, the examiners should agree on the lines of questioning to be followed, and who will lead on particular issues.

The internal and external examiners are equal as examiners, but the internal will normally consider it appropriate to defer to the external in the conduct of the examination. When two externals have been appointed they too are equal as examiners. The supervisor(s) if present may participate only at the specific invitation of the externals(s).

While practice may be as flexible as is required, it is suggested an oral should not normally be less than one and a half hours. When an examination lasts longer than two hours appropriate breaks must be agreed. At the end of their examination, the student should be told that the examiners will proceed to discuss their report, and should be advised when to return to hear the examiners' recommendation. The student and the supervisor (if present) should then be asked to withdraw.

If, owing to illness or other urgent and unforeseen reason, an examiner is unable to attend the oral examination, it may be postponed to a later date. If it seems likely, however, that postponement
would be a serious hardship to the student, it should be considered whether it is appropriate to appoint an alternative examiner.

7.2.4 Examiner reports

Examiners are required to submit two reports, an independent written report on their assessment of the thesis and a joint report form indicating the joint recommendation of the examiners and details of the oral examination along with a list of any required corrections. The joint report must be completed on the day of the examination. An account of the oral examination, a joint recommendation and signatures of the examiners must be provided.

These should be submitted to the Graduate School Registry Officer gradresearch@uhi.ac.uk within one week of the oral examination taking place.

For UHI award: the examiners recommendation is passed to RDC and considered by the Committee which has delegated power to recommend to the UHI Academic Council on behalf of RDC whether a thesis be sustained and the relevant degree be conferred or whether the thesis is referred or failed. For University of Aberdeen award: the decision made by the examiners at the oral examination is a recommendation and must be approved by two College Postgraduate Officers who have delegated power to recommend to the Quality Assurance Committee on behalf of Senate. Where a thesis is referred the reason must be provided. For resubmission the examiners must give details of any conditions.

7.3 THE OUTCOME OF THE EXAMINATION

The examiners may decide that:

- The degree is awarded unconditionally; or

- The degree is awarded, subject to the completion of minor corrections to the satisfaction of the internal examiner within three months - this recommendation should be made where minor corrections are either (a) factual, typographic, limited in extent and can be achieved immediately after the oral, or (b) where there is no doubt that the thesis is of a standards for the degree sought but corrections are needed which should not require major re-working nor re-interpretation of the intellectual content of the thesis; or

- for UHI award only - the following option does not apply to students registered for a University of Aberdeen award: The degree is awarded, subject to the completion of major corrections to the satisfaction of the internal and external examiners within six months; or

- The student is required to make substantial amendments and to submit the thesis for re-examination by the internal and external examiners within a stated period which should not exceed 12 months. This may require a second oral examination; or

- The student is awarded a lower degree without further examination. This outcome is available only where the target award is a doctoral degree. The intended degree is not awarded, but an MPhil is awarded instead; or

- The student is not awarded any degree.
Minor corrections should be carried out within three months. One of the examiners, usually the internal, is required to check that the necessary corrections have been completed. When corrections have been made, the internal examiner’s certification on the appropriate form should be submitted to the Graduate School Registry Officer. The internal chair is not permitted to certify that the student has complete the minor corrections. In the case where there are two external examiners plus an internal chair, one of the externals must be chosen to certify that the minor corrections have been completed.

**For UHI-award only:** Major corrections should be carried out within six months and usually both the internal and external examiners are required to check that the necessary corrections have been completed. When corrections have been made, both examiners’ certification on the appropriate form should be submitted to the Graduate School Registry Officer.

What is minor is a matter of judgement, but if it is the case that one examiner will be able to check that corrections have been made then the recommendation that the thesis be sustained subject to minor corrections may be appropriate.

If, however, an examiner would require to reread the whole or a significant part of the thesis, or to check every quotation and reference again, then the recommendation should probably be that the student be given the opportunity to resubmit the thesis in a revised form, either for the same degree or for a lower degree, within a stated period, which should not exceed twelve months. The examiners on the joint report form must provide a full account of the reasons.

When resubmission is recommended, the examiners should also make recommendations about the conditions for resubmission, and must provide a written statement about what is required to bring the thesis up to an appropriate standard for the award of the degree. A copy of this statement should be lodged with the Graduate School Office along with the report forms, and this statement will be given to the student. The student should consult with their supervisor when revising the thesis. The student and the examiners should not be in contact during this time. Director of Studies may contact the examiners for points of clarification only.

### 7.4 RESUBMISSION OF A THESIS

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

Following re-submission the examiners may recommend that the:

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

Where a thesis has been resubmitted, a second oral examination will be held only if a proposal to that effect, normally on the recommendation of the examiners, is approved by the awarding
University. The examiners should clearly state in their first joint report that a second oral is being recommended. If a second oral were deemed necessary, whilst the main focus might be on the elements that the student has been asked to address, the whole thesis would be the subject of the examination. Students should therefore be prepared to answer questions on any part of their thesis.

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

7.5 CONSIDERATION OF EXAMINERS’ REPORTS AND NOTIFICATION OF OUTCOME

**For UHI award:** the examiners recommendation is passed to RDC and considered by the Committee which has delegated power to recommend to the UHI Academic Council on behalf of RDC whether a thesis be sustained and the relevant degree be conferred or whether the thesis is referred or failed.

**For University of Aberdeen award:** the Examiners’ recommendation is considered by two College Postgraduate Officers who have delegated power to recommend to the Senate, on behalf of the Quality Assurance Committee, whether a thesis be sustained and the relevant degree be conferred, or whether the thesis be referred or failed.

Once the recommendation has been approved by the UHI Research Degrees Committee (UHI award) or the University of Aberdeen Quality Assurance Committee (University of Aberdeen award), the student will be informed in writing of the outcome of the examination.

Please see the following diagram for an overview of the thesis submission and examination process.
Thesis submission and examination processes – for UHI and UoA awards

Start Here

2 months in advance of expected thesis submission, student submits to Graduate School.
FORM: Intention to Submit

Graduate School contacts the Director of Studies – start thinking about the viva and exam panel.

Director of Studies submits to Graduate School for RDC approval (UHI award) or UoA Cttee (UoA award).
FORM: Nomination of Examiners

Student submits to Graduate School:
UHI award - 2 soft bound copies of thesis + FORM: Submission of Thesis for exam
UoA award - 2 softbound copies of thesis + FORM Thesis deposit declaration and checklist

Graduate School sends thesis to examiners
NOTE: To maintain the independence of the exam panel, the student MUST NOT contact the examiners outside of the viva.

Student receives official letter with the viva outcome – from Graduate School (UHI award) or UoA (UoA award)
NOTE: Regs state notification to be sent within 2 weeks of the viva.

Examiner report submitted to the Graduate School for approval by RDC subgroup (UHI award) or UoA Cttee (UoA award).
NOTE: Regs state submission by examiners within one week of viva.

Viva.
Examiners will give a verbal recommendation to the student.

Internal Examiner organises viva and informs the student, Director of Studies and Graduate School.
NOTE: Viva is normally within two months of receipt of thesis by examiners.

CONGRATULATIONS. Passed.

OR...

MINOR CORRECTIONS: usually 3 months to make thesis corrections from the date of the viva outcome letter.

Complete corrections and send 1 soft bound copy to Graduate School for dispatch to internal examiner.

OR...

UHI award only: MAJOR CORRECTIONS: usually 6 months to make thesis corrections from the date of the viva outcome letter.

Complete corrections and send 2 soft bound copies to Graduate School for dispatch to internal and external examiners.

OR...

RESUBMISSION: usually 12 months to make thesis corrections from the date of the viva outcome letter.

Resubmit 2 soft bound copies to the Graduate School for dispatch to internal and external examiners.

OR...

Examiners complete resubmission report and sends to Graduate School.
NOTE: usually no 2nd viva, unless requested at 1st viva.

Student submits final thesis:
UHI award – To Graduate School: 1 hard bound copy + 1 PDF version by email + FORM: Final Submission form (hard copy only)
UoA award – To UoA: 1 hard bound copy + 1 pdf version on CD-ROM. PLUS PDF version of thesis also sent to UHI Graduate School.

Examiner(s) submit form to Graduate School confirming corrections are satisfactory
SECTION 8 - AWARD AND GRADUATION

8.1 CONDITIONS OF AWARD

The award of your research degree can only be confirmed once certain conditions have been met:

- Your examiners' reports have been approved by the UHI Research Degrees Committee (for UHI award) or University of Aberdeen Quality Assurance Committee (for University of Aberdeen award);

- Confirmation from the examiner(s) that they are satisfied that any corrections have been completed;

- The UHI Graduate School Office (for UHI award) or the University of Aberdeen Registry (for University of Aberdeen award) has received one copy of the final, corrected, hard bound thesis and a non-editable pdf version;

- The UHI Graduate School Office (for UHI award) or the University of Aberdeen Registry (for University of Aberdeen award) has received a completed Final Submission Form (for UHI award) or Thesis Deposit Declaration and Checklist Form (for University of Aberdeen award);

- For UHI award - all tuition fees have been paid; for University of Aberdeen award – all outstanding debts have been paid.

- If applicable, all assessed or taught modules have been completed successfully.

Please make sure your contact details are kept up-to-date as correspondence concerning the outcome of your examination and your award will be sent to your current email address and term-time postal address. For UHI awards, please log into UHI Records via the Student Portal to view/update your contact details; for University of Aberdeen awards, please log into the Aberdeen Student Portal to view/update your contact details.

8.2 ACCESS TO COMPUTER ACCOUNT

For UHI awards, your University computer account will remain live for three months after the award notification date (i.e. the date of the letter confirming your award has been conferred).

For University of Aberdeen awards, your student computer account is closed from the date when the Aberdeen Registry sends the letter confirming completion and eligibility to graduate.

Therefore please ensure any emails or files you wish to keep, and are currently on a University computer, are saved elsewhere in advance of this.

8.3 GRADUATION CEREMONY

Graduands are invited to attend a graduation ceremony in person. Graduation ceremonies take place at each Academic Partner on different dates and students should check with their host Academic Partner or the Graduate School Office the exact deadline for returning their application to
graduate. Students awarded a University of Aberdeen degree can also attend an Aberdeen ceremony and will be contacted directly by Aberdeen regarding this.

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

It is the responsibility of each student to complete an Application To Graduate Form and to decide whether to graduate in absentia or in person; this form will be sent direct once the award has been conferred - University of Aberdeen students can also find the form here.

8.4 KEEPING IN TOUCH

After graduation, you automatically join the UHI alumni community, which gives you access to a range of benefits and services that make it well worthwhile keeping in touch with us – find out more information and sign up here
SECTION 9 - GOOD RESEARCH PRACTICE

UHI expects the highest standards of integrity to be adhered to by its researchers. The following indicates the standards of good practice which are required to be adopted by staff and research students throughout the academic partnership and which are intended to satisfy the requirements of all funding authorities. This is to promote and promulgate good research practice, integrity and rigour in research, and to create a culture in which the following general points will be understood and observed:

9.1 INTEGRITY IN RESEARCH

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

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

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

9.2 OPENNESS IN RESEARCH

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

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

9.3 ROLE OF EXTERNAL BODIES

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

9.4 LEADERSHIP AND SUPERVISION IN RESEARCH

Senior colleagues will ensure that a research climate of mutual co-operation is created in which all members of a research team or an individual are encouraged to develop their skills, and in which the open exchange of ideas and appropriate acknowledgement of the direct and indirect contributions of others is fostered.
Supervisors are required to supervise all stages of the research process, including outlining or drawing up a hypothesis, preparing applications for funding, protocol design, data recording and data analysis. It is the responsibility of the research supervisor to explain best research practice and ethical considerations as early as possible.

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

9.5 MANAGEMENT AND OWNERSHIP OF RESEARCH

At the outset of a research programme all researchers should be clear on management and ownership of, where relevant:

- Data and samples used or created in the course of the research; and
- The results of the research.

Researchers are required to seek guidance from their immediate supervisor if clarity is needed on any aspect of such management or ownership.

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

Data generated in the course of research must be kept securely in paper or electronic format, as appropriate and in accordance with good practice in the storage of primary data, record-keeping and ethical issues. Back-up records should always be kept for data stored on a computer.

9.6 ETHICAL PRACTICE IN RESEARCH

The UHI Research Ethics Framework has been designed to promote a fair balance between a researcher’s right to unrestricted academic enquiry whilst ensuring adherence to appropriate and robust ethical standards to ensure the protection of all those participating in research studies. The process for gaining ethical approval for research activity is set out in the UHI’s Research Ethics Framework and involves completion of the online application form.

All students and staff engaged, or about to become engaged, in research activity are encouraged to read the framework and associated documents found on the University’s research ethics webpage at https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/research-enterprise/resource/ethics/.

9.6.1 Research involving human participants - Researchers should ensure the confidentiality of personal information relating to the participants in research, and that the research fulfils legal requirements such as those of the Data Protection Act 1998.

9.6.2 Research involving animals - Research involving animals must have the appropriate approval which may require Home Office licenses for the investigator and the project. Researchers
must consider, at an early stage in the design of any research involving animals, the opportunities for reduction, replacement and refinement of animal involvement.

9.6.3 Research involving oral data collection - Research involving the collection, preservation and use of sound and video oral material must conform to relevant Ethical and Technical Practice.

9.7 RESEARCH MISUSE

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

9.8 PUBLICATION AND AUTHORSHIP PRACTICE

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

The practice of honorary authorship is unacceptable.

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

9.9 GUIDELINES ON KEEPING RESEARCH RECORDS

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

9.9.1 Keeping formal or written electronic records

Researchers should keep a formal record of their work in a notebook, or where appropriate, an electronic record, used specifically for this purpose. Where practicable, one central master record should be maintained for each research project.

9.9.2 Data generated

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

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

9.9.3 Items to be included in a research record

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

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

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

- Project protocol or design
- Evidence of peer review
- Protocol/design amendments and relevant dates
- Deviations from protocol/design and reasons
- Evidence of ethical and other approval, as required
- Details of the research team
- Information about PhD or training supervision
- Funding
- Relevant study documentation (e.g. consent forms, questionnaires, clinical record forms etc.)
- Details of where and how study documentation is stored
- Data collection procedures
- Key data collection dates (e.g. biological samples, research clinic attendance, postage of questionnaires, interview dates, focus group dates)
- Data and sample storage procedures and dates of backup of data
- Data entry procedures including name of current file data, and if/when renamed/updated
- Description of the quality assurance procedures (e.g. backup, data entry quality checks etc.)
- Data analysis
- Who has overseen the analysis
- List of outputs agreed and authorship
- Note of any conditions on publication
- Notes and minutes of any project meetings in particular outcomes and action points
- Periodic updates on project progress
- Changes in data format (e.g. changes in coding).

9.10 ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

9.10.1 Non-Academic Misconduct

Instances of non-academic misconduct will normally be dealt with by the hosting Academic Partner’s Student Disciplinary Code, however in some instances investigations may be undertaken through the UHI non-academic misconduct policy and procedures.
9.10.2 Academic Misconduct

Allegations of academic misconduct will be investigated in accordance with the academic misconduct policy and procedures. In all assessed work, students should take care to ensure that the work presented is their own and that it fully acknowledges the work and opinions of others. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that they do not undertake any form of academic misconduct or gain advantage in any other way.

Plagiarism, including self-plagiarism (which occurs when the creator of a work uses that work, or parts of it, in subsequent research papers or other output without appropriate acknowledgement that the material has been previously published), deception or the fabrication or falsification of results will be regarded as academic misconduct. Allegations will be investigated in accordance with the academic misconduct policy and procedures.

Plagiarism is the use, without adequate acknowledgement, of the intellectual work of another person. A student cannot be found to have committed plagiarism where it can be shown that they have taken all reasonable care to avoid representing the work of others as their own.

If the examiners of a research degree, having read the thesis and having heard the student’s oral defence, believe that the work reported in the thesis is not the student’s own work or that the thesis in whole or in part has not been composed by the student, they will inform the student that plagiarism is suspected and that no decision can be made.

In this situation the internal and external examiners’ role is restricted to the presentation of evidence and they will be required to produce a detailed written report. The examiner’s report forms; the detailed report and copies of the thesis will be passed to the Graduate School Office. The Graduate School Office will investigate the allegation with the student and Director of Studies. This will include meeting with the student to discuss the allegation. If, after investigation, the Graduate School Office believes that plagiarism may have taken place, full details will be sent to the Research Degrees Committee for formal investigation.

Where there is reason to believe that cheating in a prescribed degree assessment has taken place a complaint should normally be made through the Principal of the Academic Partner, it should not be dealt with as part of academic assessment. The role of the internal and external examiner shall be restricted to the presentation of evidence; they shall have no role in deciding whether a student is guilty of cheating but they may, as appropriate, submit evidence to a disciplinary hearing.

9.10.3 Research Misconduct

Research misconduct is defined as: The fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or deception in proposing, carrying out or reporting results of research or deliberate, dangerous or negligent deviations from accepted practices in carrying out research. It includes failure to follow established protocols if this failure results in unreasonable risk or harm to humans, other vertebrates, or the environment, and facilitating of misconduct in research by collusion in, or concealment of, such actions by others. It also includes financial impropriety in accounting for research funds, intentional unauthorised use, disclosure or removal of, or damage to, research-related property of UHI or of another, including apparatus, materials, writings, data, hardware or software or any other substances or devices used in or produced by the conduct of research.

It does not include honest error or honest differences in the design, execution, interpretation or judgement in evaluating research methods or results, or misconduct unrelated to the research process. Similarly it does not include poor research unless this encompasses the intention to deceive.
9.10.4 Principles for investigation of allegations of research misconduct

It is reasonable for UHI and its Academic Partners to expect students to carry out their work with due care and diligence, to carry out all reasonably given instructions fully and to observe the various UHI and Academic Partner Policies and other Regulations which are relevant and apply from time to time. For the vast majority of students, this does not present a problem, but it has to be recognised that occasionally problems do arise and breaches of rules or regulations, errors and/or omissions occur. Where these arise, these matters will be dealt with fairly and reasonably in the light of the needs of the business. UHI will investigate all allegations of research misconduct made against its students and in instances where it is considered that disciplinary action may be necessary; the following procedure will be used:

- Allegations must be made in writing and addressed to the Principal/Director of the UHI Academic Partner and to the Graduate School Office.
- The Graduate School Office will arrange for the allegations to be investigated by a small committee convened by the dean of Research, where appropriate, the relevant Faculty Dean, Head of School/Academic Partner Head and a subject specialist, who may be a member of staff or an external assessor invited to assist with the investigatory process.
- If the committee upholds an allegation of research misconduct, the research student will be advised that a case will be made to terminate their programme of study/research through student disciplinary procedures.

UHI endorses the following principles when investigating allegations of research misconduct:

- The responsibilities of those dealing with the allegation are clear and understood by all interested parties.
- Measures are in place to ensure an impartial and independent investigation and to ensure that line management obligations or other interests of those dealing with the allegation do not conflict with these procedures.
- Investigations of research misconduct are confidential.
- Anyone accused of misconduct will have the right to respond and to be accompanied by a person of their choosing at any formal misconduct hearing.
- All interested parties are informed of the allegation at an appropriate stage in the proceedings.
- Allegations are dealt with in a fair and timely manner.
- Proper records of the proceedings are kept.
- The outcome will be made known as quickly as possible to all interested parties.
- Anyone found guilty of misconduct is given the right to appeal.
- If appropriate, efforts are made to restore the reputations of accused parties if the allegation is dismissed.

9.10.5 Involvement of external funding agencies

UHI will inform an external funding agency, in confidence and at the earliest opportunity, of allegations of serious research misconduct likely to be of concern to the funding agency where it seems that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the allegation may be substantiated on investigation.

It is UHI and its Academic Partners’ responsibility to investigate allegations of research misconduct, however, in exceptional cases, external funding agencies may wish to undertake their own investigation into alleged cases of research misconduct which concern their funded researchers, for example where an external funding agency’s reputation is at risk or where it is dissatisfied with the investigation undertaken by UHI. Any investigations undertaken by an external funding agency would normally only be undertaken following consultation between that agency and the appropriate representative(s) of UHI.
SECTION 10 - APPEALS AND COMPLAINTS

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

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

Research students undergo regular progress monitoring reviews and students who have any concerns about their progress should discuss these with their supervisors as soon as possible. Concerns can also be communicated to the Graduate School Office directly or through progress monitoring reports.

If problems persist and the student is dissatisfied, they should approach the Director of their Centre, Principal of the Academic Partner and thereafter the Graduate School Research Support Officer.

10.1 ACADEMIC APPEALS

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

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

The Assessment Appeals Procedure provides further information.

10.2 COMPLAINTS

Full details of the UHI complaints policy and procedure can be found here.

Students are encouraged to resolve complaints informally wherever possible. Complaints should be addressed in the first instance to the person who is in charge of the activity concerned, i.e. the Director of Studies about academic matters or the Graduate School Office about other matters.

The Highlands and Islands Students’ Association or the Graduate School Office will assist students if they are unsure about how to pursue a complaint.