London South Bank University
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London Doctoral Academy

# Supervision Handbook

for Supervisors and their
Research Degree Students

# contents

# Welcome to the new Supervision Handbook a source of information and support for Supervisors and their postgraduate research students.

The establishment of the London Doctoral Academy aims to nurture the development of LSBU's Postgraduate Research Students, developing professional researchers who will make significant contributions in their future career. In terms of the wider University, increasing the number and quality of our Postgraduate Research Students is central to the creation of a portfolio of applied research programmes that address real world challenges. Doctoral provision is a significant element of the University's research environment and culture. Our students inspire and support the development and dissemination of new research and publications, and are a living advertisement for the University's research.

Being a Supervisor directly benefits the research and personal development of research-active academics who choose to be Supervisors, and supervision is a core element in the researcher learning journey.

I recognise that working with doctoral students can be very different. Students may set their own focus of enquiry, determine their own direction, and rapidly become more knowledgeable than their Supervisor. It can be unclear what the student wants from the process; the process itself is necessarily less well-defined and structured; and it is less predictable which students are likely to succeed. The skills required to be a Supervisor can go well beyond those needed for formal teaching on taught programmes.

Being a Supervisor is one of the most rewarding areas for any academic researcher and offers the highest level of 'learning conversation'. Enjoy.

**Professor Paul Ivey**
Pro Vice Chancellor
(Research and External Engagement)

| Change control | |
| --- | --- |
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For any queries or suggestions please contact **pgr@lsbu.ac.uk**

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 About this handbook

This handbook has been developed by Research, Enterprise and Innovation (REI) and the Schools' Directors of Postgraduate Research, and formally approved by the University Research Board of Study. It gives an overview of London South Bank University (LSBU) processes from the perspectives of both Supervisor and the research student, with signposting to forms, policies and procedures and core systems. It also provides additional information and resources to support successful supervision.

There is more detail on University practice than is covered in the Research Degrees Code of Practice. For example, it covers the approach to School Panel Reviews and the type of questions. It also sets out the University's expectations of both Supervisors and students and management of the supervisor-student relationship.

The handbook audience includes potential supervisors and prospective applicants in addition to current students and Supervisors and so is published on our web site.

The scope of this handbook includes all postgraduate research (PGR) degrees. The regulations and systems covered are based on the University's new regulations and use of the HAPLO PGR Manager administrative system. For information or queries on old regulations or administrative processes please contact the Postgraduate Research Degrees Team.

This handbook works alongside the other main collateral for the London Doctoral Academy:

- Research Degrees Code of Practice
- Doing a research degree… the essentials
- Online training programme

Please contact us if you have any queries, spot any errors, or have any suggestions as to how we could improve our systems or this handbook: **pgr@lsbu.ac.uk**

## 1.2 Overview of research degrees

A research degree is awarded for the creation and interpretation, development or clarification of knowledge that extends the leading edge of a discipline. Supervisors should not rely completely on their own doctoral experience as programmes differ internationally and between institutions, and there have also been changes over time in the UK. For example, there is now a stronger focus on research and other training as integral elements of a research degree with timely submission and completion.

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) set out the competencies for doctoral students in its 2015 report 'Doctoral Degree Characteristics'.
**www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Doctoral-Degree-Characteristics-15.pdf**

The Qualifications Frameworks level descriptor for the doctoral degree includes generic information about what all holders of the doctorate will be able to do, and the qualities and skills that they will have. QAA lists doctoral graduates as being able to:

- Search for, discover, access, retrieve, sift, interpret, analyse, evaluate, manage, conserve and communicate an ever-increasing volume of knowledge from a range of sources;

- Think critically about problems to produce innovative solutions and create new knowledge;

- Plan, manage and deliver projects, selecting and justifying appropriate methodological processes while recognising, evaluating and minimising the risks involved and impact on the environment;

- Exercise professional standards in research and research integrity, and engage in professional practice, including ethical, legal, and health and safety aspects, bringing enthusiasm, perseverance and integrity to bear on their work activities;

- Support, collaborate with and lead colleagues, using a range of teaching, communication and networking skills to influence practice and policy in diverse environments;

- Appreciate the need to engage in research with impact and to be able to communicate it to diverse audiences, including the public;

- Build relationships with peers, senior colleagues, students and stakeholders with sensitivity to equality, diversity and cultural issues;

- Prepare, plan and manage their career development, knowing when and where to draw on support.

In addition to these core attributes, doctoral researchers will of course have had diverse life experiences and varying opportunities during their doctoral studies, and so will graduate with a unique range of attributes.

QAA recognises that the content, structure and engagement with a doctoral programme will vary significantly according to the student's subject area and personal circumstances. It is an individual experience. Factors that may affect this include:

- The field of study and the broad subject area, whether single subject or multidisciplinary;

- Experience (academic and life) before enrolling on the doctorate;

- Qualification chosen;

- School or division and the form in which skills training is provided;

- Mode of study - full-time, part-time, campus-based or distance learning;

- Relationship with the supervisory team, sponsors and collaboration with industry.

## 1.2.1 LSBU structure of doctorates and postgraduate research qualifications

The following postgraduate research degrees are approved by the University's Academic Board:

- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

- PhD by Published Work

- PhD by Prior Publication

- Professional Doctorate

- Higher Doctorate

- Master by Research (MA(Res), MSc(Res))

- Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

A full list of current awards which includes the full list of professional doctorates is available at **www.lsbu.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/96259/list-of-awards.pdf**

# 2 Roles and responsibilities

This section sets out who does what across the main groups and individuals involved in supporting Postgraduate Research Students, and of course the responsibilities of students themselves.

## 2.1 Groups: committees, panels and teams

### 2.1.1 University governance

- The London Doctoral Academy is led by the Associate Director of Research and Head of the London Doctoral Academy, ensuring postgraduate research and teaching is integrated with the University's wider research community;

- Student input is important. An invitation is sent annually to all Postgraduate Research Students to an open forum which informs future activities and plans for the London Doctoral Academy. A student representative is elected annually to the University Research Committee and the University Research Board of Study;

- The University Research Board of Study reports to the University Research Committee (URC) which is in turn responsible to the Academic Board.

### 2.1.2 Schools

- Responsibility for Postgraduate Research Students in each School rests with the Dean through their nominees. The Deans delegate the day-to-day responsibility to Directors of Research and Enterprise or Directors of Postgraduate Research who are responsible for supervision, facilities and academic progression recommendations via School Panel Review.

### 2.1.3 School Panel Review

- Initial authority for approval of the research RES progression reviews 2, 3 and 4A and B for PhD and Professional Doctorates. Recommendations are sent for review and ratification by the University Research Board of Study;

- The panel is made up of an Independent Reviewer who will be an independent academic with topic/methods relevant experience plus the supervisory team where available. An Independent Chair is optional, with the exception of the RES2 and RES3 progression. See section 5.2 for more information on this process.

## 2.1.4 University Research Board of Study (RBoS)

**Strategic Purpose:** To support the University Research Committee with oversight of postgraduate research activity and standards.

**Scope and Remit:** Responsible to the University Research Committee for:

1. Postgraduate Research candidate recruitment admission, progression and completion

2. Oversight of Postgraduate Research student appeals

3. Examiner appointment

4. Examination conduct

5. Ratification (or otherwise) of supervising panel recommendations.

**Membership:**

- Director Research, Enterprise and Innovation

- 7 x Director of Postgraduate Research Degrees

- 1 x Chair of University Ethics Panel

- 1 x Associate Director of Research

- 1 x Library and Learning Resource representative

- 1 x Research Degrees Programme Manager

- 1 x Professoriate representative

- 1 x Post-Doc representative

- 1 x Postgraduate Research Degrees Team, Development Lead

- 1 x Research Environment Co-ordinator

- 1 x Research student

## 2.1.5 Postgraduate Research Degrees Team

- The "public face" of the London Doctoral Academy, providing professional services to staff and students. Team members include: Research Degrees Manager, Research Degrees Support Officers who are allocated to individual Schools and the Development Lead;

- The Development Lead works with marketing and the School Directors of Postgraduate Research to encourage qualified applications and acceptances and developing and identifying doctoral leads with industry and collaborations and other sources of doctoral funding;

- Provision of appropriate central and London Doctoral Academy web content for research degrees working alongside the School and Course finder content;

- Maintain information and collateral providing guidance on academic process, administrative systems and issue resolution for students, Supervisors and other staff. This information also supports external engagement and recruitment;

- Support the administrative framework in HAPLO PGR Manager including access permissions, management of data protection, staff and student training and documents/information;

- Support for progression including identification of progression issues with the Supervisory team escalating issues to the School's Postgraduate Director of Research where necessary;

- Panel Review arrangements:

  – Support for room booking where required;

  – Ensure computer facilities are available if required;

- Examination arrangements:

  – Obtain University Research Board of Study Chair's Action (form RES 11) for examination arrangements submitted;

  – Organise the room and refreshments;

  – Receive the submitted theses and send out to the examination team;

  – Obtain CV and, where relevant, passport page from external examiners to enable fee to be paid;

  – Receive preliminary reports and recommendation of the examination team;

  – Send out corrected thesis to examiners as instructed in writing by the examination team;

  – Arrange conferment of award as appropriate.

- Lodge one electronic copy of the thesis in pdf format for University library that will also form part of the British Library electronic source;

- Design and provision of a central training and development programme for students jointly with the Research Environment team and Library staff. This includes development of induction and a structured programme of events; generic and individually targeted publicity; review and evaluation of both the training and the communications approach including metrics such as attendance, no shows and qualitative and quantitative feedback;

- Liaise as required with relevant professional service groups to support and promote wider development activities for students including commercial research projects and teaching opportunities;

- Dissemination of information on relevant funding opportunities for research students;

- Additional student support ranging from signposting and directing students to wider university services for pastoral care and academic development to specific information required by students such as letters to Councils;

- Administrative support for the University's Research Board of Study;

- Management of the end-to-end funded studentship process including due diligence, compliance with contractual and approval processes, advertising of opportunities, and support for student stipend and client invoicing processes. Dealing with any non-academic issues or problems arising and providing feedback on outcomes to the individual/s concerned;

- Regular review of benchmark University competitor activity and performance.

## 2.2 Individual roles and responsibilities

### 2.2.1 Research Students

- Spend at least 40 hours a week on research full time or 16 hours a week part time. We recognise however that ultimately it is the quality of the research insights and outcomes that is important;

- Full time students are expected to take four weeks holiday plus bank holidays. The timing needs to be agreed in advance by Supervisors;

- Maintain good research practice as defined by RCUK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct **www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/reviews/grc/rcukpolicyandguidelineso ngovernanceofgoodresearchpracticefebruary2013-pdf/**

- Discuss and assess the equipment and facilities required with Supervisors at an early stage in the research, and confirm this with Technical Support Services to ensure the University has both capacity and capability. Any new equipment funding will need to be discussed and agreed with the School;

- Develop ways of working with the Supervisory team and proactively set up a meetings schedule with the team and individual Supervisors. Any cancellation or timing changes to the meeting schedule must be made in good time, and meetings proactively rearranged.

- International (non-EU) students must meet their Supervisor fortnightly to comply with the tier 4 visa terms, and any sickness or absence must be notified in line with the University's standard policy **www.lsbu.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0007/88162/sickness-and-absence-policy-tier4-visa.pdf**

- Provide written material well in advance to the supervision team (at least 48 hours and longer for significant pieces of work such as draft chapters) to ensure a constructive discussion at the meeting;

- Maintain a written record of all supervisory meetings and agreed actions in HAPLO PGR Manager;

- Maintain progress of the work in line with the University's overall schedule and the timing and approach agreed with Supervisors;

- Evidence stage progress as required in the Research Degrees Code of Practice through formal RES reports and School Panel Reviews;

- Complete within the required time frame for the research degree as set out in the Research Degrees Code of Practice;

- Plan personal research and career development, starting with an initial skills audit and development plan using the RES2 form. Progression should be updated yearly using the appropriate RES forms. Keep a record of engagement in key skills and research development along with reflection on development using HAPLO PGR Manager, maintaining the portfolio and submitting for audit if required;

- Use the University's Postgraduate Research management system HAPLO PGR Manager for access to standard documentation, events and training, personal record of training, personal CV, review of progression, ensuring information is always up to date;

- Participate in the University's induction and Key Skills training programme, external and internal development opportunities, and in the researcher community;

- Pursue opportunities to network and present updates and findings from research through presentation at seminars and conferences and papers for publication. Get agreement from Supervisor(s) and any sponsor before submitting any work for publication. Agree with Supervisor(s) if research should be discussed with third parties, bearing in mind the need to maintain confidentiality;

- Be open and honest about any difficulties or delays to the research or challenging circumstances including financial problems or ill health. This includes, before submission of the thesis, informing Supervisors of any special circumstances which may have adversely affected the research. Tell Supervisor(s) if there is a need to take time out from the research programme and apply formally to suspend studies;

- Take the initiative in raising problems or difficulties. Where possible discuss issues first with Supervisors and escalate if necessary to the School Director of Postgraduate Research. Information on the University's formal complaints system is available: **www.lsbu.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/84423/student-complaints-procedure.pdf**

- Contribute to the University's feedback participating in external and internal surveys;

- As part of the University's wider research community provide support 'within reason' on other research projects where your expertise is required, from Undergraduate to academic;

- Be aware of, and comply with, the University's institutional policies e.g. Academic Regulations, data protection, ethics and research integrity, intellectual property, equality and diversity;

- Work with Supervisors to ensure the research project complies with Health and Safety requirements and all risk assessments and relevant technical training is undertaken;

- Obtain all necessary clearances through research governance and ethics frameworks. Collection of research data outside the UK must be discussed with the Postgraduate Research Team before data collection, and may be subject to ethical approval;

- Re-enrol annually and pay all fees. Problems paying tuition fees which mean re-enrolment is not possible means study must be formally interrupted using the University's standard process. Otherwise students are automatically withdrawn by the University.

## 2.2.2 Supervisors (including Director of Studies)

- Discuss with students their preferred and relevant ways of working. Set clear boundaries for issues such as attendance, working hours and leave;

- Maintain contact at regular meetings with the student, either individually or at a team, to support and monitor progress. Meetings are recommended at least every four weeks, and more often depending on the stage of the research. International research student meetings must be fortnightly;

- Ensure compliance with all relevant Health and Safety Policies;

- Ensure Health and Safety is considered in planning and budgeting and that resources are used effectively and in proportion to the research project risks;

- Provide timely and constructive feedback on the research progress and on work giving formal feedback on written work within a maximum of four weeks;

- Provide expert advice and assistance to support students to make good progress on their research and become independent researchers;

- Ensure students are making progress with their development, have attended mandatory core training, and are maintaining proper records of their progress;

- Provide pastoral care and support, though the Director of Studies should lead on this;

- School Panel Review attendance;

- Inform students of any lengthy periods of absence during the vacation and periods of research leave;

- Supervision team members may be expected to take over the duties of the Director of Studies if they are absent for a prolonged time (for example due to research leave, long vacation, ill health), and liaise with them during this period. A RES8 application is required to apply for permanent rearrangement of supervisory team, and is the responsibility of the Director of Studies;

- Maintenance of a public profile as a researcher and Supervisor in the University's People finder and biography information in HAPLO PGR Manager (RES 9 form);

- Invest in personal development as a Supervisor, including taking on wider supervisory roles such as Independent Chair and internal and External Examiner;

- Experienced Supervisors are responsible for mentoring and supporting those with less experience.

### 2.2.3 Director of Studies (1st Supervisor)

These responsibilities are in addition to those listed for all Supervisors.

- Evaluate and manage applications, arranging and leading the formal interviews of all appropriately qualified students for relevant research projects.

- Lead the student's introduction to the Supervisory team as part of the induction process and ensure students are aware of their responsibilities;

- Ensure a regular schedule of meetings is in place between student and the supervisory team and that the student maintains a written record of all supervisory meetings and agreed actions in HAPLO PGR Manager;

- Guide the direction and extent of the research to enable its successful completion, within the period set down in the University's regulations. Assist students to define the topic to be tackled in their research and details of the methodology (form RES2). This includes guidance on possible approaches to the research, systematic recording of data, and the maintenance of a clear record of work undertaken;

- Confirm during supervisory meetings that the student understands whether research is progressing at the appropriate level and speed for successful completion. Inform the Director of Postgraduate Research in writing if the student appears unlikely to reach the appropriate standard. Where appropriate, suggest actions to remedy the situation;

- Ensure that students are aware of their responsibilities for their own key skills development, and participate in the University's training and development opportunities;

- Ensure students have access to the environment and equipment to conduct their research, and escalate resource issues to the Director of Postgraduate Research where necessary;

- Advise on ethics, ensuring approval is in place when required and that the research conforms to agreed principles, and check and sign off the student's application;

- Ensure the student is aware of academic misconduct, plagiarism and the implications of any misconduct;

- Work with the student to ensure all significant hazards are identified and adequate controls put in place to manage the risks in line with legislative requirements, e.g. appropriate guarding of machinery. Ensure the research project complies with our health and safety policies. Work with technicians from Technical Support Services to address foreseeable hazards when working in laboratories;

- Suspend activities if Health and Safety is being compromised, and seek advice from Line Management or through the Health, Safety and Resilience Team. Record any near miss, property damage or injury events on the University's online accident reporting portal;

- Appointment of the Independent Reviewer to chair the School Panel Review meetings using the list of Progression Panel members available in HAPLO PGR Manager to allow the Postgraduate Research Degrees Team to organise and timetable School Panel Reviews;

- Ensure monitoring and examination processes and completion of the progression forms from HAPLO PGR Manager within the requested timescale;

- Ensure additional developmental feedback is provided to the student after all evaluation stages;

- Offer guidance on the coherence and quality of the student's work including the thesis;

- Offer guidance on the preparation for the *viva voce* (this should involve mock examination), and advise on any subsequent corrections that may be requested;

- Advise on appropriate dissemination activities and encourage the student to publish findings and present their work, both internally and externally;

- Be the initial point of contact for student issues and complaints;

- Complete the notification (form RES8) of permanent change of Supervisors;

- Assist students with applications for funding;

- Approve relevant conference attendance and support student applications for research funds at School level;

- In consultation with the School's Director of Postgraduate Research and the supervision team, make arrangements to cover the Director of Studies role if there is a period of extended leave;

- Lead on pastoral care and support.

### 2.2.4 Director of Postgraduate Research

These responsibilities belong to the Director of Research and Enterprise where the role of Director of Postgraduate Research is not separately appointed in a School.

#### Planning, recruitment and admissions

- Development and implementation of the School's research degrees strategy, including planned growth of student numbers and correlated Supervisor capacity. Monitoring performance to plan;

- Assist the Development Lead and the Department of Marketing and Communications to support School recruitment, maximising the number of potential qualified applications and acceptances. This includes maintenance of appropriate web information about the School's research and Course finder details which need to be aligned with central content promoted for research degrees and the London Doctoral Academy;

- Raise the profile of research students within the School and seek external funding to support future students;

- Management of applications, directing them to potential Director of Studies as appropriate, taking into account expertise, workload and experience. Ensuring that responses are received and forwarded to Admissions on the agreed timescale;

- Ensure that all significant equipment purchase costs and use of facilities for the research project are identified and formally agreed at the earliest point, ideally before accepting the applicant. The School Executive Administrator should be notified of any significant budget costs and the Deputy Director of Technician Services for significant use of technical resources. Both should confirm their agreement in writing before the student can be accepted or progressed;

- Set up and lead an appropriate panel to assess applications for studentships in line with standard process;

#### Development and progression

- Oversight of the orientation and induction of new Postgraduate Research Students (including students who are in the taught phase of their Professional Doctorate), at both formal and informal School inductions;

- Development of a range of activities and networking opportunities that support growth of the research community within the School and inclusion of research students, and supports cross-School connections. Formal evaluation of the activities and sharing of good practice;

- Responsibility for School compliance in progression procedures, individual student progression, and School completion performance against university targets;

- Management of escalated enrolment or progression issues and complaints, and resolution of School issues concerning the research environment and equipment usage. Escalation of individual student issues to Research Board of Study for formal recording and action where there is concern over response times;

- Advice regarding the appointment of Independent Reviewers by the Director of Studies;

- Provision of posting string (accounts coding) to Supervisors and students for approved purchases;

- Support Supervisor recruitment and development within the School;

### Other

- To attend relevant School and other committee meetings concerned with postgraduate research student issues and to raise any specific issues that require attention. This includes Membership of University Research Board of Study, and helping to share good practice across the University;

- To raise the profile of postgraduate research related matters across the School and encourage colleagues to supervise students and seek funding to support future students.

### 2.2.5 Mentor

- Supports a Supervisor or Director of Studies undertaking the role for the first time, or where the supervisory team has limited overall experience. Schools may have formal or informal approaches. There should be clarity in the Supervisor team as to the objectives of the mentoring. Mentors do not normally sit on the School Panel Reviews.

### 2.2.6 Adviser

- Contributes specialist knowledge or provides a link to an external collaborating body. Note: This does not mean that a member of the supervisory team cannot be external. Advisers do not normally sit on School Panel Reviews.

### 2.2.7 Independent Reviewer

- Leads School Panel Review questioning process around the progress and level achieved in the research and the supervision support and resources provided. Will have expertise in the field of research.

### 2.2.8 Independent Chair

- This section refers to the role as defined for the *viva voce* but the role in School panels is similar;

- Acts as Chair at RES2 and RES3 School Panel Reviews. This role is also optional in other School Panels;

- Ensures the *viva voce* examination is carried out in accordance with the University's regulations and Research Degrees Code of Practice;

- Ensures the agenda is agreed with the relevant parties;

- Intervenes or stops the *viva voce* examination, if deemed necessary;

- Raises any issues that may arise with the Postgraduate Research Degrees Team, to report to the University Research Board of Study.

## 2.2.9 External Examiner

- Provides a preliminary report related to the written thesis a week before the *viva voce* examination;

- Contributes to a structured *viva voce* as a member of the examination team and a decision on the thesis;

- Provides a list of corrections where required in collaboration with the Internal Examiner to the Independent Chair and the Postgraduate Research Degrees Team;

- Works with the Internal Examiner to provide verbal feedback to students at examination, with a confidential session post-examination with the student if requested.

## 2.2.10 Internal Examiner

- Provides a preliminary report related to the written thesis a week before the *viva voce* examination;

- Contributes to a structured *viva voce* and a decision on the standard of the thesis;

- Provides a list of any corrections in collaboration with the External Examiner to the Independent Chair and the Postgraduate Research Degrees Team;

- Works with the External Examiner to provide verbal feedback to student at time of examination, with a confidential session post-examination with the student if requested.

# **3** Supervisory team

The Code of Practice section 6.1 describes the structure and experience of the supervisory team that ensures the combined team has both the research expertise and the experience in supporting students on the particular qualification.

PhD supervision is normally expected to involve about 100-150 hours of activities from the Supervisor(s), including providing feedback on reports, making notes on meetings, setting targets, preparing joint manuscripts. The amount of time required and specific activities will vary significantly between disciplines. Under the South Bank Agreement, the allocated STA for each PhD student should be 50h (divided amongst Supervisors if there is more than one).

If a Supervisor takes an extended break they must ensure students have continuity in supervision. They must discuss how to manage this with the Director of Postgraduate Research and Head of Division and together make a decision on the most appropriate replacement Supervisor. The RES 8 will need to be completed by either the Director of Studies or the Director of Postgraduate Research to confirm the change of Supervisor. The Supervisor should arrange a period of time before leaving to work with the student and the replacement Supervisor for a smooth transition.

If a Supervisor is absent for more than four weeks due to ill health it is the responsibility of the Director of Studies (or the School's Postgraduate Director if the Director of Studies is ill) to ensure that the supervisory duties are covered.

# 4 Recruitment and selection

Finding an expert who is passionate about their proposed area of research is the key driver for many students in selecting their University. So it is important Supervisors have an up to date profile on the LSBU People finder (the form is available from the web team). Check the role is tagged as a Supervisor so when applicants filter and search for potential Supervisors the record is visible. In case applicants are using People finder without filtering, Supervisor experience and the Research Centre affiliation should be included in People finder.

Our research into service level responses for applicants indicates that delays increase the likelihood of applicants withdrawing or rejecting the University's offer. Our target timeline is reject within 10 working days, accept within 15 working days, when an appropriate Director of Studies is identified on first consideration by the School.

The School Director of Postgraduate Research is responsible for checking performance on application processing is on schedule. Where there is a delay in the School's assessment of an application, then Admissions should be informed of the reason as that may affect the marketing communications for that applicant.

**Rejection - 10 Days**

| Admissions | PGR Director | Director of Studies | Admissions |
|------------|--------------|---------------------|------------|
| 1 Day | 2 Days | 5 Days | 2 Days |

**Acceptance - 15 Days**

| Admissions | PGR Director | Director of Studies | Interview | Admissions |
|------------|--------------|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 Day | 2 Days | 5 Days | 5 Days | 2 Days |

Current undergraduate students should consider carefully the implications of a research degree which is a different experience to earlier forms of education. Our 'Doing a research degree… the essentials', link has more information and the Quality Assurance Agency provides overall guidance. **www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Doctorate-guide.pdf**

Initial informal contact between potential Supervisors and applicants can be helpful in understanding interests and synergies with current University research. However, no commitments can be made before the formal application process has been completed.

Minimum entry qualifications for all research degrees are covered in the Code of Practice. The requirements for some courses may be higher and these and typical candidate requirements are covered in the LSBU website Course finder.

Accreditation of prior experience and learning (APEL) is possible for Professional Doctorate EdD students who have either completed the taught phase elsewhere, with at least a 60% average,

or have a substantial record of publication and scholarly activity. The EdD APEL form is available from the EdD Course Administrator. Students applying for APEL will be required to provide written evidence and, when submitting prior publications and evidence of scholarly activity, to undertake a *viva voce*.

## 4.1 Application process, requirements and management

1. All applications should use UKPASS **https://pgapp.ukpass.ac.uk/ukpasspgapp/login.jsp**

2. Postgraduate Admissions or the International Office who deal with International applications aim to forward all complete and apparently qualified applications to the relevant Postgraduate Director of Research within one working day of receipt. Given the team has a wide remit this may not be possible at peak times or due to absence;

3. The Director of Postgraduate Research logs onto UKPASS, vets applications to confirm they are appropriate, and sends to a prospective Director of Studies within two working days;

4. The prospective Director of Studies should assess the application and respond to the Director of Postgraduate Research within five working days. The prospective Director of Studies may contact the student directly to find out more about the research proposal if necessary. Director of Studies response to the application may be:

   – Yes – and I am going to arrange an interview with the student;

   – No, with the relevant UKPASS rejection criterion; or

   – Possible, but I am unable to act as Director of Studies because of lack of relevant expertise, workload, sabbatical, etc.

If they are unable to act as Director of Studies but believe the application is potentially suitable then the Director of Postgraduate Research should try to find a second prospective Director of Studies for review.

1. Where the response is 'yes', the potential Director of Studies should arrange to interview the student within 5 working days. This may be done face-to-face or remotely. Email can be used to support detailed queries but may not be used as a substitute for interviewing. It is recommended that all interviews are conducted by the Director of Studies and a second, appropriately qualified, member of staff. Telephone calls may be used where there is no other feasible form of communication with the student;

2. The outcome of the interview should be communicated to the Director of Postgraduate Research, who will provide the decision and information on the application to Admissions or the International Office within two working days. They must return the completed grid including conditions and all other information, and Admissions or the International Office will then action the decision through UKPASS.

### 4.1.1 Assessing an application

- Do the applicant's qualifications and skills suggest they are good candidates for doctoral research?

- Does the proposed research topic match your expertise?

- Are the aim and objectives clear?

- Are the resources available to support the work?

- Is it likely that the proposed research can be completed within the required 3 year period?

- Is time available for you to supervise the project?

- Is new equipment required or is there a significant use of standard technical facilities? In which case consult Technical Support Services to check they will be able to support and provide availability of facilities (three day service level agreed) and the School Executive Administrator to ensure that the new equipment will be funded by the School;

- Is the application well presented, logical and easy to understand? This will give a good indication of the applicant's ability to present and communicate their ideas;

- If the student has declared a disability remember this is only relevant in relation to any adjustments which the University may need to provide and must not be considered in any other way which may be discriminatory towards the applicant.

### 4.1.2 Interview questions

Supervisors should prepare a list of questions in advance of interview. Areas to consider are:

- What competences and knowledge must the applicant be able to demonstrate at the start of the project such as relevant literature and methodologies;

- Areas that require further exploration in the application and research proposal;

- Reasons and motivations for undertaking a research degree and, in particular, the passion for their research topic;

- Understanding of the scope of a research degree and why they have chosen LSBU for this research topic;

- Personal attributes such as creativity, confidence, tenacity, motivation, timekeeping and the likelihood of a good working relationship;

- Potential weaknesses. How can they be improved by training and development, and are they so significant as to be likely to affect the timescale of completion?

**Suggested interview structure:**

**Rapport**

Ask easy questions such as why they want to do the doctorate. Explore factual information in application form

▼

**Knowledge/skills**

Allow applicants to demonstrate the knowledge and skills relevant to the research project

▼

**Personal attributes**

Ask for examples from real life. Invent a research project scenario and ask the candidate how they would deal with it

▼

**Practical issues**

How will the degree be funded? Travel? Balance with other commitments?

▼

**Candidate questions**

Get back by email if you can't answer on the spot

## 4.2 Applications to transfer to LSBU from another university

Students need to have withdrawn from or have permission from their current University to transfer. They should send their work to date to the identified Director of Studies, apply through UKPASS and go through all standard admission processes, enrolment and RES2 formal acceptance of the research project by the University. They will be given agreed 'advance standing' and be expected to complete in an appropriately shorter time.

## 4.3 Studentships

'Studentships' are where a doctoral student is funded in one of the following ways:

- LSBU scholarship – fully or partly funded by the School, Research Centre or other department;
- Matched or fully funded scholarship – funded wholly or in part by an external organisation;
- Research Council Scholarship – there are various types and rules; details are available from the relevant Research Council website.

The funding may cover fees, stipend, conference support and equipment for the project.

Studentships where there is an external funder are included in the University's financial accounts as Research-Studentships income. They must go through the University's formal approval process which evidences approval from Dean, Finance and REI before any final agreement with the client and formal contract signature.

Where the studentship forms part of a wider research project, and the university is charging for additional academic time over and above standard supervision allowance, then it will be categorised as Enterprise-Contract Research and will need to go through the Enterprise SharePoint Approval process before any final agreement with the client and formal contract signature.

The Postgraduate Research Degrees Team will lead on the management of externally funded studentships and will: support costing, undertake the required due diligence checks on the client and work with GovLegal to set up the contract. The Postgraduate Research Degrees Team should be contacted as early as possible when an interested client is identified.

The Postgraduate Director of Research is responsible for the recruitment process for studentships but may delegate to the Director of Studies. Recruitment for studentships should be transparent and public with advertising on both the University's own website, **www.jobs.ac.uk** and any technical publication identified as relevant to the research project for a period of at least four weeks. If the contractual arrangements mean there is a variation to the University's standard policy in relation to student Intellectual Property ownership then this must be included in the initial advert and made clear in the student's contractual terms.

The University's standard HR process should be used for assessing and recording application evaluation and the candidates' interview performance. All interview documentation should be sent to Admissions and retained for one year. The interview panel composition should be Director of Studies, Client and one other (Director of Postgraduate Research or second/third Supervisor or Mentor or Adviser). A supervisory team member with technical expertise in the proposed research must be a panel member.

Student enrolment must not be confirmed without final sign off of the completed form CR1, which will ensure that the student will be paid promptly.

Enrolment normally takes place on the last Thursday of the month.

# 5 Research progression stages

Progression is assessed at formal six monthly School Panel Reviews and informally through discussions between the student and Supervisor. Identifying gaps in knowledge or skills or research development is an important part of the learning process for both students and supervisors. School Panel Reviews also give students practice in the *viva voce* examination format.

Passing six monthly progression assessments does not contribute to the overall assessment of the research degree. It is a gateway for progression to the next stage. We see it as ethical to ensure where a student has embarked on a qualification and it later becomes clear they are not suited that the University deals with the situation as soon as possible. Section 5.2.2 shows the possible outcomes at each progression stage. Students must pass the RES2 Research Proposal submission in order to continue with their PhD or Professional Doctorate. If they fail RES2 or RES3 they have one month to resubmit, and the outcome of this second panel will be final. At panels RES3, RES4A and RES4B two failures in a row means the student cannot continue with a PhD or Professional Doctorate. If this happens alternative awards or withdrawal will be suggested.

Target timescales are set out in the Research Degrees Code of Practice. In essence these are for full time (FT) PhD to submit within three years with ratification in 4 years; and for part-time (PT) PhD to submit within 5 years with ratification in six years. The diagrams below give an overview of the yearly stages of progression for research degrees.

The PhD timelines also apply to a Professional Doctorate after successful completion of the taught stages though the professional doctorate time will be shorter by one year, one RES4A/B iteration.

**Diagram showing structure of full time PhD**

| Year | Month | Research Student Task | University Task |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Year 1** | 1st | Enrolment | |
| | 6th | Research Proposal Submission (RES2) | |
| | 7th | Review Panel | Review Panel |
| | 8th | | RBoS Approval |
| | 12th | First Progress Report (RES3) | |
| **Year 2** | 2nd | Review Panel | Review Panel |
| | 3rd | | RBoS Approval |
| | 6th | Interim Progress Report (RES4A) | |
| | 7th | Review Panel | Review Panel |
| | 8th | | RBoS Approval |
| | 12th | Annual Progress Review and Professional Development (RES4B) | |
| **Year 3** | 1st | Review Panel | Review Panel |
| | 2nd | | RBoS Approval |
| | 6th | Interim Progress Report (RES4A) | |
| | 7th | Review Panel | Review Panel |
| | 9th | | Examination Arrangements (RES11) |
| | 12th | Thesis Submission and Declaration Form (RES13) | |

## Diagram showing the structure of a part-time PhD

| | Month | Research Student Task | University Task |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Year 1** | 1st | Enrolment | |
| | 9th | Reseach Proposal Submission (RES2) | |
| | 10th | Review Panel | Review Panel |
| | 11th | | RBoS Approval |
| **Year 2** | 6th | First Progress Report (RES3) | |
| | 7th | | Review Panel |
| | 8th | | RBoS Approval |
| | 12th | Annual Progress Review and Professional Development (RES4B) | |
| **Year 3** | 1st | Review Panel | Review Panel |
| | 2nd | | RBoS Approval |
| | 6th | Interim Progress Report (RES4A) | |
| | 7th | Review Panel | Review Panel |
| | 8th | | RBoS Approval |
| | 12th | Annual Progress Review and Professional Development (RES4B) | |
| **Year 4** | 1st | Review Panel | Review Panel |
| | 2nd | | RBosS Approval |
| | 6th | Interim Progress Report (RES4A) | |
| | 7th | Review Panel | Review Panel |
| | 8th | | RBoS Approval |
| | 12th | Annual Progress Review and Professional Development (RES4B) | |
| **Year 5** | 1st | Review Panel | Review Panel |
| | 2nd | | RBoS Approval |
| | 6th | Interim Progress Report (RES4A) | |
| | 7th | Review Panel | Review Panel |
| | 8th | | RBoS Approval |
| | 9th | | Examination Arrangements (RES11) |
| | 12th | Thesis Submission and Declaration Form (RES13) | |

## 5.1 Supervisor input by progression stage

### 5.1.1 PhD/Professional Doctorate

| **Application to acceptance** |
| --- |
| • Confirm acceptance or rejection within 5 working days of receiving application |
| **Induction** |
| • Introduction to the supervisory team |
| **Initial research period** |
| • Establish fortnightly meeting schedule and relevant supervisory team attendance<br>• Record meetings in HAPLO PGR Manager |
| **Research proposal confirmed (RES2): FT 6months/PT 9 months** |
| • Approve RES2 and submit (to Director PGR who tables at University Research Board of Study) |
| **First progress report RES 3: FT 12months/PT18months** |
| • Ongoing meetings with HAPLO PGR Manager recording<br>• Regular review/update of student research timetable<br>• Approve RES forms and submit (to Director PGR who tables at University Research Board of Study)<br>• Set up and participate in School Panel Reviews |
| **Ongoing progress: RES4A FT 18 and 30 months, PT 30 & 42 months; RES4B FT24 months PT 12,24 & 36 months** |
| • Support as per RES 3 |
| **Writing up stage** |
| • Confirm to student that submission will be acceptable<br>• Identify examiner and list details in HAPLO PGR Manager<br>• Complete RES 11 and submit (to DIrector PGR who tables at University Research Board of Study) |

| Thesis submission (2+ months before the viva) |
|---|
|  |

| Viva examination |
|---|
| • Director of Studies forwards list of corrections to Student, and discusses |

| Conferment |
|---|

### 5.1.2 MRes

We recognise the value of panel assessment and feedback to help students prepare for the final *viva voce* and ensure they are given any support needed as early as possible. Though the MRes does not have formal intermediate assessment stages we recommend the Supervisor and student agree milestones for a formal presentation covering review of progress, questioning and feedback with themselves plus an Independent Chair (at around 6-8 months as appropriate for the particular student's research project). The agreed research schedule should include timing for submission of the thesis plan, draft of contents list, chapter 1, sample references and list of figures with an aim to submit the final thesis at 12 months.

## 5.2 RES forms and School Panel Review

The School Panel Review format gives students practice at discussing their research with academics outside of the supervisory team and prepares the students for the final *viva voce* examination. Students answer questions from the Independent Reviewer, an independent academic with topic/methods relevant experience, without input from Supervisors. In addition to constructive feedback from the Independent Reviewer, the process allows Supervisors to give students developmental feedback.

As with every aspect of the student journey, adjustments for disabled students should be put in place to ensure they are not disadvantaged and are given equal opportunities.

The foundation of the School Panel Review process and assessment are the RES stage forms. They are integral to HAPLO PGR Manager which highlights progression slippage.

The panel consists of: Independent Reviewer, Director of Studies and Second/third supervisors. An Independent Chair appointed by the Director of Studies, either a colleague within the School or an academic from another School with relevant expertise is mandatory for RES2 and RES3 and optional for other stages. The Director of Studies can appoint an Independent Chair if appropriate for any given panel.

The Independent Reviewer may change from one panel meeting to the next although it is recommended that the same reviewer is used for the RES2 and RES3 panels to ensure consistency. The Independent Reviewer cannot act as the Internal Examiner at the end of a project if they have been the Independent Reviewer in the last year of the project.

### 5.2.1 Overview of School Panel Review

School Panel Reviews follow the same structure:

1. The student is invited to formally present and discuss their research as described in the relevant RES form

2. Questioning of the student and supervisors

3. The Independent Reviewer leads the questions for the student with the Supervisors there in principle as observers. The Independent Reviewer should question the Supervisors separately to ensure that the student has the full support and resources required.

4. Independent Reviewer/Supervisors discuss the recommendation of the Panel Review

   The student waits outside. The panel agree the recommended outcome and any conditional and recommended revisions. They informally tell the student of the

recommended outcome followed by a written report.

The student is verbally informed of the recommendation of the review meeting on the day. Written feedback should be in a week but no later than a fortnight. Students must not contact the Independent Reviewer. Any communication, such as clarification of a recommendation must be through the supervisory team.

5. The University Research Board of Study ratifies the recommendation.

## 5.2.2 Detailed format and outcomes of School Panel Review: RES2, RES3, RES4A and B

| RES stage | RES2 | RES3 | RES4A | RES4B |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **RES content** | Research proposal submission. Acceptance of this allows formal registration for the programme and confirms the form of the thesis in line with the Research Degrees Code of Practice. | 10,000 word report focused on the literature review and a firming up of the main aims, objectives and the contribution to knowledge<br><br>Key skills programme update covering what has been achieved over the last 12 months, whether the development plan has changed, and what will be achieved over the next 12 months. This must be discussed with the supervisory team before submission. | Interim report from mid year 2 onwards completed separately by the student and the supervisory team. It covers progress since the last Panel and can include publications, attendance or presentation at relevant conferences, ethics applications, collection of data for the research project | End of year report from year 2 onwards completed separately by the student and the supervisory team. It covers progress since the last Panel and can include publications, attendance or presentation at relevant conferences, ethics applications, collection of data for the research project. It should also review the key skills development plan to see it still meets the student's needs. This should be updated as appropriate as it is expected it will change as the researcher goes through the doctoral journey. |
| **Panel composition** | 1 Independent Chair who is an experienced Supervisor . This is mandatory for RES3 and optional for all other panels | | | |
| | 1-2 Independent Reviewer, anacademic with topic/methods relevant experience (as determined by the School's Director of Postgraduate Research) | | | |
| | Supervisory team where available (not including Mentors or Advisers) | | | |
| | The Director of Postgraduate Research must ensure that there is sufficient experience in the panel to sign off that the proposed supervisory team has the overall required balance of supervisory and research expertise and experience as required in the Code of Practice | The Independent academic is preferably the same as RES 2 stage. This would be the last Panel Review they could attend if they are going to be on the examination team | The Independent academic is preferably the same as RES 2 stage, unless they are going to be on the examination team | The Independent academic is preferably the same as previous stages |
| **Actions before the panel** | Student submits the final version of the RES 2<br><br>Panel date is set no later than 4 weeks after submission | Student submits the final version of the RES 3<br><br>Panel date is set no later than 6 weeks after submission | Student submits the final version of the RES 4A<br><br>Panel date is set no later than 4 weeks after submission. | Student submits the final version of the RES 4B<br><br>Panel date is set no later than 4 weeks after submission. |

| RES stage | RES2 | RES3 | RES4A | RES4B |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Panel management and content** | **Introductions**<br><br>**Student presents their research verbally (15 minutes)** Discussion/presentation should be around 15mins and should include the concept of the research, main aims and objectives, methodology, resources, likely contribution to knowledge, programme of work, resources required and key skills needed to complete the research. It should highlight specific challenges and difficulties. Students have an option to use a PowerPoint or poster as the basis for the overview of their research.<br><br>**Questioning of the student (30 minutes)**<br><br>Questioning should be led by the Reviewer with Supervisors as observers. Questioning should be around the quality, progress and resources presented and whether the programme has the potential to be of suitable standard for the award being considered:<br><br>-Relevance, currency and completeness of the literature review<br><br>-Does the proposed work fit against the timeframe for completion and resources. Are clear deliverables and milestones in place<br><br>-Explore the methodology alongside the resources required and timeline to ensure it is appropriate<br><br>-Explore references, structure, quality of presentation and syntax of work<br><br>-Identify any student concerns or queries and identify a plan to resolve them<br><br>**Questioning of the Supervisors** to ensure that the student has full support and resources required. Where relevant this should consider any collaboration and collaborative supervision with external bodies.<br><br>**Student leaves the room for 5-10 mins**, so that the independent academic(s) and the Supervisors can decide on the outcome. | **Introductions where applicable**<br><br>**Student presents their research verbally (15 minutes)** Literature review, where the research sits in the wider research environment and an outline of progress since the RES2 Panel.<br><br>**Questioning of the student (30 minutes)**<br><br>Questioning should be led by the Reviewer with Supervisors as observers. Questioning should be around the quality, progress and resources presented and whether the programme has the potential to be of suitable standard for the award being considered:<br><br>-Key skills development over the past 12 months<br><br>-Confirm the developmental plan is still suitable for the student and the project moving forward for the next 12 months<br><br>-Publications plan for the work should be explored where appropriate. This should include other avenues of disseminating research such as conferences<br><br>-Identify student concerns/queries and mitigation<br><br>**Questioning of the Supervisors** as per RES2<br><br>**Student leaves the room for 5-10 mins**, so that the independent academic and the Supervisors can decide on the outcome. | **Introductions where applicable**<br><br>**Student presents their research verbally (15 minutes)** over the timeframe from the last panel including:<br><br>-3 minutes dedicated to an overview of the research. Students may use a poster as the basis for this.<br><br>-Inform any changes to the concept of the research, main aims and objectives, methodology, apparatus, likely contribution to knowledge, programme of work, resources required<br><br>-Brief update on key skills undertaken to date<br><br>-Highlight specific challenges and difficulties<br><br>-Discuss other elements in their form review such as a submitted a journal article<br><br>**Questioning of the student (20-30 minutes)**<br><br>Questioning should be led by the Reviewer with Supervisors as observers. Questioning should be around the quality, progress and resources presented and whether the programme has the potential to be of suitable standard for the award being considered<br><br>Questioning of the Supervisors as per RES 2<br><br>**Student leaves the room for 5-10 mins**, so that the independent academic and the Supervisors can decide on the outcome. | **Introductions where applicable**<br><br>**Student presents their research verbally (15 minutes)** over the timeframe from the last panel including:<br><br>-3 minutes dedicated to an overview of the research. Students may use a poster as the basis for this.<br><br>-Inform any changes to the concept of the research, main aims and objectives, methodology, apparatus, likely contribution to knowledge, programme of work, resources required<br><br>-Brief update on key skills undertaken to date<br><br>-Highlight specific challenges and difficulties<br><br>-Discuss other elements in their form review such as submitted a journal article etc.<br><br>**Questioning of the student (30 minutes)**<br><br>Questioning should be led by the Reviewer with Supervisors as observers. Questioning should be around the quality, progress and resources presented and whether the programme has the potential to be of suitable standard for the award being considered<br><br>-Particular focus on the key skills programme and how this has developed over the last 12 months and whether the development plan is still appropriate.<br><br>**Questioning of the Supervisors** as per RES 2<br><br>**Student leaves the room for 5-10 mins**, so that the independent academic and the Supervisors can decide on the outcome. |

| RES stage | RES2 | RES3 | RES4A | RES4B |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Possible outcomes** | 1.Continue with PhD/Professional Doctorate<br><br>2. Defer the result. A revised Research Proposal must be submitted within one month. lindicate whether a full panel or an Independent Reviewer are required to assess the revised proposal. A result can only be deferred once, and when the proposal is resubmitted the outcome will be decided.<br><br>3. PhD students only: Work on MPhil with an opportunity to return to PhD status at RES3.<br><br>4. Prof Doc students only: Exit with Masters Award and do not continue.<br><br>5. Withdrawal<br><br>6. Interrupt (if an issue is identified the decision can be to interrupt, but with commitment to return to complete studies, with the route identified) | As for RES 2 except where MPhil or Withdrawal is the first time there has been an outcome other than PhD the student is given one final opportunity to meet the requirements at RES 4A<br><br>For PhD if this is the second consecutive Panel where MPhil or Withdrawal is the outcome there will be no further opportunity to be considered for the PhD.<br><br>For Prof Doc students only if the outcome is Exit with Masters Award there is one final opportunity to meet the requirements of Doctoral standard at RES4A.<br><br>Any suggested changes or modifications should be seen by the supervisory team who will confirm changes have been made by an agreed date, normally within two weeks. | 1.Continue with PhD/ Professional Doctorate<br><br>2. PhD students only: Work on MPhil<br><br>3. Prof Doc students only: Exit with Masters Award<br><br>4. Withdrawal<br><br>5. Interrupt (if an issue is identified the decision can be to interrupt, but with commitment to return to complete studies, with the route identified)<br><br>If this is the second consecutive Panel where MPhil, Masters or Withdrawal is the outcome there will be no further opportunity to be considered for the PhD or Professional Doctorate | As for RES 4A |
| **Post panel** | 1. Student called back into the room and the independent academic gives the student the result.<br><br>2. RES2 form completed in HAPLO within a week of the panel review<br><br>3. RES 2 form ratified at next Research Board of Study, and updated in HAPLO<br><br>4. Director of Studies provides additional developmental feedback<br><br>5. Suggested changes, modifications are reflected in the RES 3 1st Progress Report. | 1. Student called back into the room and the independent academic gives the student the result.<br><br>2. RES3 form completed in HAPLO within a week of the panel review<br><br>3. RES 3 form ratified at next Research Board of Study, and updated in HAPLO<br><br>4. Director of Studies provides additional developmental feedback | 1. Student called back into the room and the independent academic gives the student the result.<br><br>2. RES4 form completed in HAPLO within a week of the panel review<br><br>3. RES 4 form ratified at next Research Board of Study, and updated in HAPLO<br><br>4. Director of Studies provides additional developmental feedback | 1. Student called back into the room and the independent academic gives the student the result.<br><br>2. RES4 form completed in HAPLO within a week of the panel review<br><br>3. RES 4 form ratified at next Research Board of Study, and updated in HAPLO<br><br>4. Director of Studies provides additional developmental feedback |

## 5.3 Changes to standard progression timeline

The Research Degrees Code of Practice section 3.2 covers interruption, withdrawal and extension, all of which affect the standard registration and progression timelines. The University's Interruption, Suspension and Withdrawal Procedure is available from **www.lsbu.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/96269/ interruption-suspension-withdrawal-procedure.pdf**

Definitions:

• An 'extension' is needed when a student requires more time to complete their degree than originally thought;

• An 'interruption' is required when a student needs to temporarily suspend their research but intends to continue. It is normally for six months but can be up to two years. No extension of registration is possible once a student has transferred to writing up, unless there is an approved interruption during the writing up period;

• 'Withdrawal' means the student is permanently giving up their research before successful completion.

The Director of Studies (First Supervisor) must be informed immediately a student needs to suspend or extend their research or withdraw from the programme. Ill-health, unexpected family or work difficulties, financial problems or major issues with the research itself may all prompt a need to apply to change the planned timeline.

For the maternity, paternity and adoption leave we use Research Council UK guidelines to determine appropriate periods. Students should apply to interrupt where required.

**www.rcuk.ac.uk/documents/publications/traininggrantguidance-pdf**

Supervisors should note that in exceptional circumstances they should discuss with the School's Director of Postgraduate Research whether the University should apply for an interruption on behalf of a student when they are aware that the student has a serious problem yet is not in a position to apply to interrupt themselves.

## 5.4 Identifying potential progression issues early

There are early signs which can indicate a student is in difficulty and may fail formal progression stages:

- Postponing meetings

- Making excuses for unfinished work

- Focusing on the next stage, not the task in hand

- Spending their time on other responsibilities

- Resisting feedback

- Procrastinating and not writing

- Intellectualising on minor or practical problems

- Blaming others for any minor issues

- Failing to incorporate their earlier work

If Supervisors spot two or more of these signs, they should investigate, discuss, and provide immediate and explicit guidance for the student.

A key supervisory function is to support timely progression. Many students find completing a PhD within our target periods for submission (3 FT or 5 PT years) challenging. The detailed research timetable should be regularly reviewed and updated. If there is a delay, then the approach needs to be reworked without it simply being added on to the end of a project and resulting in a late submission. If a student is late with the RES3 then this will squeeze the working time to RES4 and so on.

# 6 Ethics

Postgraduate Research Students use the University's standard academics research applications process. Where ethics approval is required students should be referred to the current London South Bank University Ethics Code of Practice and Application Process for Research Involving Human Participants. The code and the application documents and contacts can be found in OurLSBU and MyLSBU. Documents available are:

• Ethics Application Form

• Light Touch Review

• Sample Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form

Schools handle both low risk reviews with no negative responses and full reviews. A limited number of research areas need to be referred to full University Ethics Panel (UEP) as detailed in section 6.1.

NHS sponsored research is approved by School Ethics Panel. However students conducting research within health and social care should follow Health Research Authority approval guidance and process, see: **www.hra.nhs.uk** In most instances, LSBU's NHS sponsor details must be inserted and both supervisors and the sponsor carry out electronic authorisations. The School's NHS sponsor will also provide a sponsor letter with LSBU insurance details. Once NHS approval is obtained, the approval letter must be sent to the School Ethics Panel.

The service level on ethics applications required for research students is approval within 6 weeks, provided that no questions or amendments from the student are needed. Service levels are monitored quarterly by Research Enterprise and Innovation by School and sent to Research Board of Study for review.

If there is a problem with lack of timely progression for the ethics application the escalation route for School-based applications is:

1.  Via original School email application box

2.  School Ethics Co-ordinator, with a formal request from the Supervisor on progress

3.  University Ethics Panel (UEP) administrative support **ethics@lsbu.ac.uk**

For applications that were referred to UEP please mail as per stage 3 above.

## 6.1 Ethics governance and responsibilities

### 6.1.1 University Ethics Panel (UEP)

- The Panel is authorised by the Academic Board to approve applications for ethical approval on both research and enterprise activities;

- It is authorised by the Academic Board to delegate responsibilities for ethical approval of research and enterprise activities in all undergraduate and taught masters courses including the taught phase of professional doctorates to the School Ethics Panels and, with the exception of applications falling into the research and enterprise categories below, research by MRes, MPhil, PhD and Professional Doctorate students as well as members of staff.

- It considers applications for ethical approval for MRes, MPhil, PhD, Professional Doctorate students and members of staff falling into the following categories:

  - Research covering: terrorism and radicalisation; administration of substances altered at LSBU;

  - Research that requires additional insurance cover over and above the University standard;

- It cannot consider applications involving human tissue in any form. We do not conduct research involving Human Tissue as we do not have a Human Tissue Authority licence.

### 6.1.2 School Ethics Panel

- All Schools have an academic member of staff appointed as Ethics Co-ordinator who is responsible for finding appropriate reviewers for ethics applications in the School and reviewing and co-ordinating recommendations;

- The Schools have different systems but all are required to meet the service level for research student applications.

# 7 Other Policies and Processes

## 7.1 Reporting and administration using HAPLO PGR Manager

HAPLO PGR Manager provides accurate, comprehensive and up-to-date records of research degree projects. Data comes from both direct inputs from Supervisors and Students and by integration with the student records system. Students and Supervisors have access as well as School Postgraduate Directors of Research and the Postgraduate Research Degrees Team.

It allows Students and Supervisors to record supervision meetings with the key discussion points and actions agreed are entered by the Student and checked by the Supervisor. It gives a central point where all meeting information can be shared across the supervisory team and provides tracking that supervision meetings are happening.

All the RES stage progression forms are implemented in the system.

The student training and development portfolio is also maintained in the system.

HAPLO PGR Manager provides extensive reporting on every aspect of the University's research programmes. It provides real-time management information dashboards, analytical reports showing trends over time and UK visa monitoring reports. For example, Postgraduate Directors of Research have immediate access to lists of current research students and current and eligible Supervisors for their School.

Supervisors are automatically set up in the system and have access to their own students' records. The system is intuitive and Supervisors may not need extra help in addition to the embedded systems guides and the accompanying manual. The Postgraduate Research Degrees can provide introductory coaching if needed, or answers to specific queries.

## 7.2 Student payments

A CR1 form is used to ensure that all processes are correctly completed and that student payments can be made promptly after the student starts. Students must not be enrolled until the CR1 form available on the intranet has been signed off, proving all supporting administrative and contractual arrangements are complete. The form which is raised by the Director of Studies also needs to be signed by the Directors of Postgraduate Research, Dean and the Research Degrees Manager. The Research Degrees Manager will notify the Director of Studies by email when the CR1 is approved.

The deadline for paperwork to be received in order for the payments team to make a payment that month is 1st of the month. Otherwise payment will not be made until the following month, though it will be backdated.

Any queries regarding delayed payments on funded studentships or hardship issues should be referred immediately to the Research Degrees Manager for resolution. Other payment issues should be referred to Fees and Bursaries in the Student Life Centre: 020 7815 6181 **fees@lsbu.ac.uk**

In order for a bursary to be paid the following information is required:

## School funded Scholarships

- CR1 form completed (Supervisor, Authorised Signatory, Director of PGR or Research all sign off);

- Posting string for bursary and fee (from Finance Business Support Manager);

- Payroll form completed with original signature received by Postgraduate Research Degrees Team (when student has enrolled);

- Bursary form completed a minimum 1 week before 1st of the month. The form is available on the intranet and will be completed by the Postgraduate Research Degrees Team and sent to the Finance BSM (Business Support Manager) and the Authorised Signatory for approval.

### 7.2.1 Studentships management process: Concept to contract and payment

1. Supervisors must have a preliminary agreement by the Director of Research or the Dean before any initial discussion takes place with a company to contribute fully or matched funding;

2. Complete the New Customer Request Form to undertake an initial credit check. This early due diligence ensures that the potential client is able to fund the ;

3. CR1 form completed (Supervisor, Authorised Signatory, Director of PGR or Research all sign off);

4. Posting string for bursary and fee (as appropriate) – important for matched funded.

5. Formal approval is required on SharePoint. This is generally classified as research income. However, if the studentship is part of a larger project that includes additional academic time over and above standard supervision then it will be enterprise ;

6. Student recruitment – must conform to standard HR advertising and management processes (see section 4.3);

7. Studentship Agreement signed by company, Student and LSBU. Ensure that when the University is not contractually retaining the Intellectual Property that the Student is aware of this;

8. Postgraduate Research Degrees Team will authorise the new customer set up to allow client invoicing;

9. Payroll form completed with original signature is sent to the Postgraduate Research Degrees Team (when the student has enrolled);

10. Bursary form completion requires the authorised signatory and Finance BSM for the School to sign off (minimum 1 week before 1st of the month).

## 7.3 Intellectual Property (IP)

The creation of intellectual property and its protection is a core objective for London South Bank University as it is crucial to the development of academic scholarship, research, teaching and enterprise. It is important for Supervisors to be aware of intellectual property as there may be situations where they need to guide or refer research students for support on intellectual property matters. Students may generate new intellectual property during the course of their research. It may mean that it is something that they need to consider taking steps to protect.

Intellectual Property or IP is any form of original creation that can be bought or sold. The definition of IP in the Copyright and Patents Act 1988 is 'creative work which can be treated as an asset or physical property' falling mainly into four main areas; copyright, trademarks, design rights and patents.

Intellectual Property Rights are conferred by law and can be protected by the filing of patents; design registrations; and trademarks. They can also be protected as copyright or in the form of know-how and trade secrets. Students may have created intellectual property that is new and that could have commercial significance. In order for them to benefit and apply it in a commercial setting they may need intellectual property protection for it. They may also need to consider intellectual property and confidentiality before presenting at a conference or publishing a paper.

For staff who need information about the University's standard Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDA) and processes that must be used in establishing student confidentiality consult the Guide for Academics: Winning and managing research and enterprise income generating projects **blog.lsbu.ac.uk/corporate-strategy/other-information/rei-guide**

### 7.3.1 Intellectual Property (IP) and the PGR student

LSBU has an Intellectual Property Policy which is applicable to staff and students. It also defines how intellectual property will be handled when working with external parties.
**www.lsbu.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/102710/intellectual-property-policy-2016-18.pdf**

In line with the LSBU Academic Regulations, students assign their intellectual property to the University. This allows the University to identify, assess and file intellectual property protection for the student should it be of commercial significance. If there is no intellectual property generated, then the intellectual property is simply assigned back to the student at the end of their studies.

If Intellectual Property matters arise you can contact Research Enterprise & Innovation for help and support. The Intellectual Property Manager can provide guidance and advice to help students. Mail **studententerprise@lsbu.ac.uk**

The University runs an extensive programme of support for students who would like to develop their idea further. The Student Enterprise team may be able to support research degree students who want to consider how to develop their idea into a business. Just mail **studententerprise@lsbu.ac.uk**

If you have any queries please contact Research, Enterprise and Innovation's Intellectual Property Manager.

## 7.4 Health and Safety

Good health and safety standards can be achieved and maintained through effective risk assessment and planning of work. The supervisor and student must work together to complete suitable and sufficient written risk assessments, for significant hazards, to minimise the risks of the activities being undertaken during the research. The supervisor remains accountable to the effectiveness of the risk assessment. Risk assessments should be stored online in the relevant student record in HAPLO PGR Manager.

The Health, Safety and Resilience Team can provide support, guidance and training on the risk assessment process to ensure health and safety legislation requirements are met. Contact **safety@lsbu.ac.uk** for more details.

Where necessary the Supervisor with technicians from Technical Services Support will work together on ensuring laboratory safety. This is likely to require co-operation to complete suitable and sufficient risk assessments to address the significant hazards associated with the research activity.

Areas where risk assessments are required, though this is not an exhaustive list, include:

- Travel

- Laboratory work

- Working at height

- Lone working

- Use of machinery

- Use of hazardous substances

- Manual handling

- Events with children or bringing in equipment

- Any other significant hazard

Where there are any activities that result in a near miss, property damage or injury, these must be reported on the University's online accident reporting portal.

This example from Northumbria University shows what can happen when risk assessments are not undertaken for student research.
**www.healthandsafetyatwork.com/risk-assessment/university-northumbria-caffeine-experiment**

### 7.4.1 Travel risk assessment

It is the responsibility of Supervisor and Student to complete the risk assessment form (available in HAPLO PGR Manager) to identify any areas of risk related to the project when collecting data outside University premises. If the risk is considered to be medium to high, they must identify ways of reducing the risk to low.

The form should be submitted to the Postgraduate Research Degrees Team who will review and approve as appropriate.

If a student is going abroad to collect data an appointment should be made with the Research Degrees Programme Manager to discuss the proposed visit.

Students should not collect data until a signed approval from the Postgraduate Research Degrees Team has been received.

## 7.5 Borrowing equipment

Laptops can be borrowed from the Library and Learning Resources.
**my.lsbu.ac.uk/my/portal/Study-Support/How-to-Guides**

Other equipment such as cameras, projectors and voice recorders can be borrowed from ICT by staff for 3-4 weeks . A Supervisor will need to sign for the equipment on behalf of a student. It may not be taken abroad without obtaining separate additional insurance cover.

## 7.6 *Viva voce* typical structure

| | |
|---|---|
| **Panel composition** | Independent Chair<br>Internal Examiner<br>External Examiner (Note: University Research Board of Study may request 2 additional External Examiners for re-examination)<br>The qualifying requirements for these roles are detailed in the Research Degrees Code of Practice<br><br>The Chair of the University Research Board of Study (or a nominee), has the right to attend the *viva voce*. Supervisors and Advisers may also attend if the candidate permits but may not speak and must leave before discussion on the result of the examination. |
| **Actions before the *viva voce*** | The Director of Studies is in charge of examination arrangements and will ask the University Research Board of Study for approval at least three months before the expected date of the examination. The Director of Studies will inform the candidate, Supervisors, the examiners, the Independent Chair and the Postgraduate Research Degrees Team of the examination date, time and venue.<br>Research Degrees Team distributes copies of the thesis<br>All examiners (not including the Independent Chair) read the thesis, and submit an independent preliminary report, on the appropriate RES 14 form in HAPLO PhD Manager.<br>The reports are shared and they meet to discuss the thesis and agree questions and areas to explore at the *viva voce* and agree the agenda<br>They confirm the thesis meets the requirements of the degree and the *viva voce* should take place |
| ***Viva Voce* management and content** | It is an open book examination and will typically take around two hours<br>The student is given the option to begin with a brief 15 minute presentation of their work or to go straight into the questioning of their research<br>The purpose of the *viva voce* is to establish that the work is of a sufficiently high standard to merit the award of the degree for which it is submitted (see Research Degrees Code of Practice section 1.2). The examiners may ask the candidate to:<br>-justify arguments<br>-justify things which have been left out<br>-ask questions about the wider research context in which the work has been undertaken<br>-explore and defend specific points<br>-discuss any developments which may flow from their work in the future, and how their work advances, modifies, or otherwise affects this wider field of scholarship.<br>-discuss strengths and weaknesses of the thesis<br><br>In the assessment of professional and/or practice-based doctorates, similar to the PhD, examiners' criteria may include the extent to which the candidate understands current techniques in the subject, for example through demonstrating engagement with and use of research methods and how they inform professional practice.<br><br>Section 5 in the Research Degrees Code of Practice gives an overview of the scope of the *viva voce*<br><br>The examiners will ask the candidate to leave the room while they discuss their recommendation<br>Examiners may tell the candidate their recommendation, but must make it clear that the final decision is subject to ratification by the University |
| **Possible outcomes** | 1. Award of the degree, no amendments.<br>2. Award of the degree subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis. A maximum of three months is normally allowed to resubmit.<br>3.Award of the degree subject to major amendments being made to the thesis. A maximum of one year is normally allowed to resubmit.<br>4. Re-examination is needed (provided this is the first *viva voce* and not itself a re-examination).<br>5. Subject to the thesis being amended to the satisfaction of the examiners an alternative level 7 award may be given. For PhD candidates, award of the degree of MPhil, for MReS candidates award of the degree of the relevant Masters;<br>6. No award and no re- examination. |
| **Post viva actions** | Examiners complete and sign the recommendation of examiners (RES 15A or 15B) which is then signed off by the Independent Chair. (See the Research Degrees Code of Practice for process where they are unable to agree a joint recommendation).<br>Timeframe is agreed for the examiners to produce a report outlining any corrections the candidate needs to complete or a statement of the deficiencies that mean no award can be given.<br>If candidates do not submit amendments and corrections by the deadline they will normally be deemed to have failed.<br>Ratification of the award by University Research Committee. |

# 8 Student development and wellbeing

Standard University services may be relevant to doctoral students and are included in this section. Student Advice at the Student Life Centre offers a wide range of face to face or telephone advice, support and guidance on issues relating to finance, debts, housing and any aspect of settling into University life.

0207 815 6454 **studentlife@lsbu.ac.uk**

## 8.1 Diversity and equalities

Disabled students are entitled to reasonable adjustments and access to the university services for disabled and dyslexic students including, for UK eligible students, Disabled Student Allowance (DSA). Those not eligible for DSA can still expect support from the University and no disabled student should encounter any form of disability discrimination at any stage in their doctoral journey from pre entry to post exit. Our disability and dyslexia services can offer expert advice on this but Supervisors must recognise that disability equality is a shared responsibility and legal requirement under the Equality Act 2010.

0207 815 6454 **disability@lsbu.ac.uk**

## 8.2 Pastoral care

Pastoral care for research students is a joint responsibility of the supervisory team, the Postgraduate Director of Research for each school, the Postgraduate Research Degrees Team, and LSBU's Student Life Centre.

The supervisory online training has pastoral care as one of its four key competency areas.

Standard University support that is relevant to research students is available as follows:

LSBU Mental Health and Wellbeing

Confidential support and advice with personal difficulties, mental health issues and counselling referrals

0207 815 6454 **studentwellbeing@lsbu.ac.uk**

### LSBU Multi-Faith Chaplaincy

Offers pastoral care and support for students from all faith backgrounds and none.

0207 815 6454 **chaplaincy@lsbu.ac.uk**

## 8.3 Language difficulties

Although English language proficiency is part of the selection criteria for doctoral students, some non-native English speakers may require further assistance. There is no specialist provision for research students and they should contact LSBU's Learning Resource Centre to review general courses available for English academic writing.

## 8.4 Complaints

The University's standard student complaints procedure applies to Postgraduate Research students. It includes students registered and/or enrolled with the University, on interruption and past students enrolled at the University at the time of the events giving rise to the complaint (subject to time limits).
**www.lsbu.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/84423/student-complaints-procedure.pdf**

We also advise students to contact the Director of Postgraduate Research in their School for support and advice.

We recognise that in terms of the University environment Supervisors are in a unique position of power and influence in terms of their relationship with the student.

The Research Degrees Code of Practice covers sexual harassment involving a member of the supervisory team and permits students to register a complaint at Stage 2 formal investigation and avoid the Stage 1 informal resolution process.

The following standard University policies are also potentially relevant for Supervisors. All can be found on OurLSBU intranet:

- Gift acceptance policy
- Lone working guidance
- Consensual sexual relationships (policy on relationships between academic staff and students)
- Safeguarding policy
- Speak up (whistleblowing policy)

- Equality, diversion and inclusion policy (which covers bullying and harassment )
- Student disciplinary procedure

## 8.5 Entitlements

The University promotes standard university-wide entitlements for students covering areas such as desk space, printing, conference attendance. They are described in 'Doing a research degree... the essentials'

## 8.6 Student training and development

The University aims to deliver a broader developmental experience which enhances the dedicated focus of research degree studies. Our approach is in line with the QAA Quality Code, Chapter B11: Research Degrees **www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Pages/Quality-Code-Chapter-B11.aspx** which states that higher education providers must '*provide research students with appropriate opportunities for developing research, personal and professional skills*'. Students must be given opportunities to develop skills and competence in a range of areas, including: research skills and techniques, research environment, research management, personal effectiveness, communication skills, networking and team working, and career management.

The supervisory team should agree training required by the student, some of which will be mandatory. Note that Health and Safety Risk Assessment training is mandatory in the first three months.

The University's programme of professional training and development includes:

- Induction to University services
- Researcher development
- Skills supporting thesis structure and writing
- Specialist technical skills
- Networking
- Professional career development
- Attendance at School seminar programmes

This programme is designed to support skills development and to ensure our students are part of the University's wider research community. Details of the current training programme, researcher events and opportunities open to Research Students are available at HAPLO PGR Manager.

Students should own their development process, and be encouraged to take all opportunities to develop their skills. This is an integral part of a research degree. Participation in development is recorded and is initially evaluated at RES 2 stage when the research proposal is formally approved, then re-evaluated at the RES3 1st progress and RES4B stages. The development stages are:

**Self-audit:** Self-reflection and assessment of current skills sets. Use the Vitae RDF as a diagnostic. Collect evidence such as certificates, work-related documentation, attendance at conferences, etc.

**Development plan:** The plan follows the audit, and identifies training and professional development needs. It will be reviewed annually by the student and supervisor.

**Maintain a portfolio:** The portfolio forms the basis for discussion and review of a student's research goals. It should include a reflective diary covering the impact of training and whether planned training met the developmental needs. All University training should be recorded in HAPLO PGR Manager.

**Annual review:** This closes the cycle and allows new targets to be set for development. The cycle begins again with revised outcomes and goals.

# 9 Supervisor career development and training

Supervising Research Students goes beyond technical subject expertise and requires investment in the development of interpersonal and managerial skills. This Handbook contains guidance in section 10 on Supervisor Good Practice. The University also offers specific training and development opportunities. We would also recommend all Supervisors are familiar with the Vitae skills development model as this is integral to our student training and development programme.

## 9.1 Supervisor development profile

As standard practice, reflection and assessment of Supervisor performance should be used to support personal development. Mentoring from a more experienced colleague is also valuable. In addition to direct Supervision of students there are many more activities linked to supervision as experience grows.

**Table showing the Supervisor learning journey, part of the wider researcher journey**

|  | First Stage Supervisor (1) | Recognised Supervisor (2) | Established Supervisor (3) | Leading Supervisor (4) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Supervision experience** | • No completions<br>• One or more current students | • One or more completions<br>• Two or more current students | • Four or more completions<br>• Two or more current students<br>• Successful resolution of Doctoral projects with significant student issues | • Ten or more completions over a period of ten or more years<br>• Two or more current students<br>• Supervisory expertise recognised and shared with colleagues<br>• Leading Researcher status |
| **Activities** | • 2nd/3rd Supervision | • Director of Studies<br>• Internal Examiner<br>• Chairs of events/ meetings<br>• Summer School lead | • Independent Chair of Review Panels and PhD Examination<br>• Mentor/ Adviser within Supervisory team | • Mentoring for Supervisor development<br>• Specific role such as PGR Director |

## 9.2 CPD and training and development opportunities

### 9.2.1 University courses

There is a range of specialist Supervisor workshops appropriate for all levels of Supervisor. All workshops are advertised by the University's Organisational Staff Development and Training Department. Log onto your MyWorkplace to see availability. Typical examples would be:

- LSBU forms, regulations and Code of Practice for Research Students *(all levels)*

- Intellectual Property *(all levels)*

- Matched funded scholarships and how they work *(all levels)*

- Independent Chair training *(level 3 or 4)*

- Mentoring a new supervisor *(level 3 or 4)*

- Advising doctoral students on teaching *(levels 2-4)*

- Managing the student relationship *(level 1 or 2)*

- Missenden Centre one day course on supervision *(level 1 or 2)*

Many of the University's other workshops support the development of the wider interpersonal skills required to develop a successful relationships with Research Students. For example:

- Difficult conversations

- Managing and enhancing team performance

- Making meetings work

- Dealing with difficult behaviour

- Giving and receiving feedback

Supervisors are accountable for the effectiveness of research degree students' risk assessments. Minimum recommended training is LSBU's Health and Safety Risk Assessment (not to be confused with the mandatory all-staff Health and Safety training), and preferably the nationally recognised IOSH Managing Safely certificate.

### 9.2.2 Online training (Research VLE Supervisory Training)

Our online training programme, developed jointly with Epigeum, covers the overall approach to supervision rather than specific LSBU rules and regulations. The eight units in the programme are designed to help you learn and apply the content to your own situation. The units develop four core competency themes:

## Project management

*You need to assist students in planning, risk analysis, time-management, and the preparation of a contingency plan in case a 'worst-case scenario' arises. This helps to ensure successful completion of the research degree within the projected time frame. This is especially important in the early stages of the project when the student is more dependent.*

## Quality Assurance

*A major element of being a Supervisor is to assist candidates in preparing a thesis for examination that meets the required standards. You need to support students in developing the necessary skills to undertake an original research project, clearly present their work to their peers and defend their approach and the validity of their conclusions. All this must be underpinned by a rigorous intellectual framework grounded in their academic discipline.*

## Pastoral Care

*The ability to complete a research degree is about more than research and writing and Research Students can face challenges along the way ranging from motivational challenges such as writers' block, professional challenges such as managing anxiety when presenting at conferences or personal issues. Supervisors need to know how and when to take on the responsibility of a mentoring or pastoral role, and when to direct to appropriate expert professional support staff.*

## Professional Development

*Though professional development is not a supervisor's responsibility alone, an effective supervisor will nurture professional development in broader skills and knowledge such as networking, public engagement and effective communication and presentations, writing papers both for publication and general audiences, knowledge transfer and teaching if there is interest in an academic career.*

The eight module structure covers:

1.  Introduction: The Doctoral context
2.  Attracting and Selecting Doctoral Applicants
3.  Approaching Supervision
4.  Setting your candidate on the right course
5.  Managing progress
6.  Expectations and preparing for examination
7.  Issues in supervision
8.  Continuing your supervisory development

## 9.3 Thinking about becoming a Supervisor?

The trigger may be an invitation to join a supervision team; an enquiry from a potential research student or a client with a particular interest in a specialist area of expertise; interest in working with a research student and potentially the most rewarding type of teaching and 'learning conversation'; recognition of the career development opportunities linked to supervision…. So what next for those thinking about becoming a Supervisor?

- Check both your own and any proposed supervisor team's eligibility. You don't need a PhD yourself to be part of a supervisory team, but you cannot study for one while acting as a Supervisor;

- Go and express your interest to your School's Director of Postgraduate Research (or Director of Research and Enterprise if the School does not have this role). You will be able to discuss the relevance of your expertise to your Schools typical applicant's research proposal;

- Attend and network at relevant events and centrally organised training such as the Summer School;

- Read one of the core texts about supervision (see Bibliography);

- Sign up for the Supervisory Online Training. Successful completion of the online training (scoring 80% or over) provides a broad understanding of the role of the Supervisor and is equivalent to one successful doctoral completion:

  - Go to Moodle VLE

  - Click on Site Catalogue

  - Search for Research Supervisory Training (n_RES_SSS_112_site)

  - Enrol yourself onto the training

- Attend the University's training session on LSBU forms and Research Degrees Code of Practice.

# 10 Supervisor Good Practice

The recommendations outlined in this section of the handbook are based on leading academic articles and texts on Supervisor practice and challenges, and there are more recommendations in the references (Appendix 2).
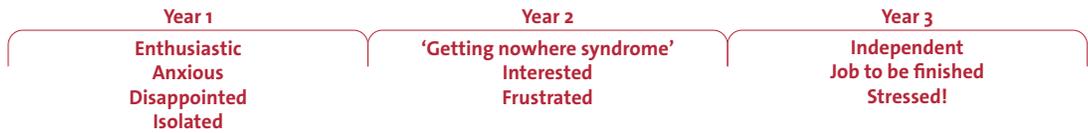
## 10.1 Supervisory styles and approach

Developing a thesis is not a linear process. Some students will produce creative and innovative work which does not look exactly like a traditional thesis but nevertheless displays all the necessary aspects to evidence doctoral level work. There is no 'one size fits all' method for supervisory support. A Supervisor's personal style should be adapted to suit the needs of their research student. It is important to discuss with the student what approach they would benefit from most. The supervisory relationship should work for both parties and needs to take account of the student's degree of independence, security, expertise, maturity, self-motivation, commitment, and articulation abilities. Reliability is always key.

There are many variables that make up a style of supervision. Wadee *et al.* (2010) provide one of the simpler options for styles of supervision, as set out below.

| Relationship Behaviour | Business Like | A more formal approach. Discussions are related to work, research and its design, the progress of analysis, and writing strategies. Personal elements are regarded as irrelevant in the most extreme cases |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | Personal | A more casual approach. Personal issues are discussed at meetings. The Supervisor places a high importance on knowing the characteristics and personality of the student |
| Task Behaviour | Product Orientated | Supervisor focuses meetings and correspondence on the results such as concept publications, and chapters. If there are any issues which lead to a delay or cancellation in meetings, the Supervisor will suggest rescheduling the meeting until the final product is complete |
| | Process Orientated | Supervisor focuses meetings and correspondence on the process which is undertaken to get the results. Emphasis on stimulating candidates and supporting them through the process. |

It is important to understand that part of the Supervisor's role is to ensure the student is motivated, as well as making appropriate progress with their work. Phillips and Pugh (2000)

suggest that the typical doctoral student undergoes the following timeline and attitudinal changes while completing their thesis:

| Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
|---|---|---|
| **Enthusiastic** **Anxious** **Disappointed** **Isolated** | **'Getting nowhere syndrome'** **Interested** **Frustrated** | **Independent** **Job to be finished** **Stressed!** |

Understanding these attitudes and their origins is important in effective supervision and support.

## 10.2 Supervision management: format, recording, and feedback

Supervisors and students should together come up with a formal workplan. This includes: the frequency of meetings, when written work is to be handed in for review, and dates for key documents or pieces of work to be completed or submitted. Students should upload the workplan to HAPLO PGR Manager at the beginning of their programme and keep it up to date.

Questions Supervisors need to ask when establishing the timeline are:

- What is the student's target date for thesis completion?

- What are the earliest dates and the latest dates for the thesis submission?

- Are there any periods of time where the student will not be able to work on their research?

Delamont *et al*. (2004) suggest giving students the following activity before they start planning the timeline and format of their programmes.

**Activity**

Provide the student with example timetables and ask
them to identify the faults in the planning process

Discuss the word limit or equivalent early so the student is prevented from planning an overambitious project. Through discussing academic constraints you can provide guidance on the appropriate size of the final project and avoid misunderstandings early on. Ideally, word limits should be incorporated into the timetable for each step of the process with separate planning that could be formatted in this way:

Literature Review                          5000 words                          Date A to Date B

### 10.2.1 Meetings

Supervisory team members should agree how meetings are to be allocated across the team. The initiative for proposing specific dates and creating the schedule is the responsibility of the student, though Supervisors must make sure that regular meetings take place. Formal meetings are required at least fortnightly for international students. More frequent meetings are likely to be required at the start and end of a student's programme.

The Student must enter a summary of the meeting and the actions agreed in HAPLO PGR Manager and Supervisors should check it has been done and it is correct.

Supervisors may need to be accessible and deal with urgent issues between formal sessions.

### 10.2.2 Feedback

Initial agreement is needed between Supervisors and students on what areas of work formal feedback will be given; for example: short assignments, essay outlines, draft articles, or whole completed chapters of a thesis. Feedback should be given within 4 weeks of an agreed submission date, and ideally earlier. The approach and format for feedback should also be discussed, with the Supervisor setting out the process and the student explaining their sensitivities, concerns and style of learning.

When providing feedback, it is important to keep in mind that the aim is to support progress and ensure a balance between constructive criticism and praise. Feedback may be perceived as challenging by the student. Supervisors may need to emphasise that feedback that recommends a student consider and possibly revise the way they are looking at something does not mean that they have failed – it does mean they are being given opportunities to learn. It can be useful to suggest students seek feedback from a range of sources, and do not rely upon feedback from one academic.

Students should be encouraged to go beyond implementing suggested changes and engage in active debate/challenge as to why changes are proposed. Students should move from compliant behaviour to actively constructing their own frames of reference.

Supervisors need to know the services and training available to students and should encourage them to access these services proactively rather than in response to a difficulty that has arisen. For example, directing a student to a session to learn how to format a thesis before writing up will ultimately save time.

## 10.3 Preparing and supporting research students

### 10.3.1 Academic and Research Integrity

Supervisors must ensure that the student grasps the concepts of research and academic integrity.

A large proportion of student time is spent researching, reading, and analysing the existing works of literature and developing theoretical ideas which contribute to their thesis. Students need a full understanding of what constitutes plagiarism. The LSBU plagiarism information is available from the library: **bit.ly/2fxP0cn**

Students should be encouraged to access support to understand referencing conventions before running into difficulties. They should not be allowed to assume that their understanding from Master level studies is adequate.

The concept of research integrity is, however, far wider than plagiarism and covers areas such as fabrication of results and appropriate data management. The Concordat on Research Integrity covers five core areas that comprise research integrity and sets out the responsibilities of researchers, employers and funders.
**www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/policy-and-analysis/reports/Documents/2012/
the-concordat-to-support-research-integrity.pdf**

Research integrity is explained to students in 'Doing a research degree... the essentials'

### 10.3.2 Literature review

The literature review defines the field of study to which new knowledge will be contributed. Students sometimes mistake the purpose of a literature review as evidence that they have read the relevant material in their field and produce a sterile listing of literature. Supervisors should encourage a critical, analytical and reflective attitude in which the literature is related to the research question and the approach taken to the research project.

Andreson sets out the purposes of a literature review as:

- Becoming familiar with the 'conversation', in the subject area of interest;

- Identifying an appropriate research question;

- Ascertaining the nature of previous research and issues surrounding the research question;

- Finding evidence in the academic discourse to establish a need for the proposed research;

- Keeping abreast of on-going work in the area of interest.

Planning and frequent consultation with students about their research and literature review helps develop their train of thought, ensuring they are up to date with current work in their research topic. Library staff can also help students with this.

**Activity**

Students should compare their literature review against one in a journal or a completed thesis so they can identify their areas of strengths and weakness

Wisker summarised the technical skills students need to write a literature review as:

- Literature searching

- Finding and using subject indexes and abstracting databases

- Selective analytical use of the academic online service provided by the library to access journal articles

- Searching the Internet on a broad scope

- Quick and effective reading

- Summarising

- Reference-keeping

- Interweaving reading and notes into arguments and discussions

If students do not keep referencing on track from the start and have to play 'catch up' later on they will face many difficulties, particularly given the increasing use of internet sources. Students should book a 1-2-1 support session with the librarians which will be tailored to their individual research needs at an early stage in their research. They will be helped to set up systems such as REFworks.

### 10.3.3 Supporting writing

Making sure students develop good writing habits is an important component of supervision. Delamont *et al*. (2004) suggest two checklists for students:

**Write early and often as...**
The more you write the easier it gets

- If you write every day, it becomes a habit

- Tiny bits of writing soon add up to something substantial

- The longer you leave it unwritten, the larger and more daunting the task becomes

**Don't get it right, get it written as...**
Until something is on paper, no one can help you to get it right

- Drafting is a vital stage in clarifying thought

- Start writing the part that is clearest in your head, not necessarily what will be read first

- Drafting reveals the sections which require more work better than any other process

By writing students will develop the ability to judge their own work, identify errors and unclear segments, and recognise areas where there is scope for expansion. To develop these skills, Wisker suggests the following approach:

**Questions for Supervisors to ask students:**

1. Where in the student's piece is it:
   - Informative
   - Contrastive
   - Analytical
   - Evaluative
   - Critical

2. Where do they engage in dialogue and with what main theories and arguments?

3. How are they incorporating arguments and the works of others?

4. Where have they demonstrated that they are engaging with the works of others and showing analytical skills on others research?

5. What are the main points and arguments, and where is it shown in their piece?

## 10.4 Identifying and supporting research student training needs and development

Students, including those still in the taught phase of their doctorate, should be encouraged to participate in a wide range of activities that will develop their skills, enable them to mix with other doctoral students, and will benefit them during and after their doctorate. Our internal research at LSBU shows students need particular support with:

- Development of true reflective learning process. Many students engage in a 'tick box' diagnosis, generally focused on their technical skills, followed by a quick fix;

- Awareness of University training available, particularly events in addition to the Summer School;

- Awareness of wider University services such as library support sessions;

- Finding the time, particularly those students who work full time, including LSBU colleagues who are also doctoral students;

- Networking and connecting with other academics and professionals in their chosen industry/research sector ;

- Post PhD careers: Students often spend limited time considering what they should do to develop their careers after their research degree is complete.

## 10.4.1 Student training and career development

This section primarily focuses on researcher development. There is no specialist University support for post-doctoral career development as their needs are similar to other groups. Students can email **jobshop@lsbu.ac.uk** and an Employability Consultant will work with them on and individual basis. Standard online careers support that all students can access is available at **www.lsbu.ac.uk/employability**.

All students are expected to take part in the Key Skills Development Programme, which provides progressive development in research and other skills. The programme is aligned with the four domains of the Researcher Development Framework (RDF) published by Vitae **www.vitae.ac.uk/researchers-professional-development/about-the-vitae-researcher-development-framework**, illustrated below.
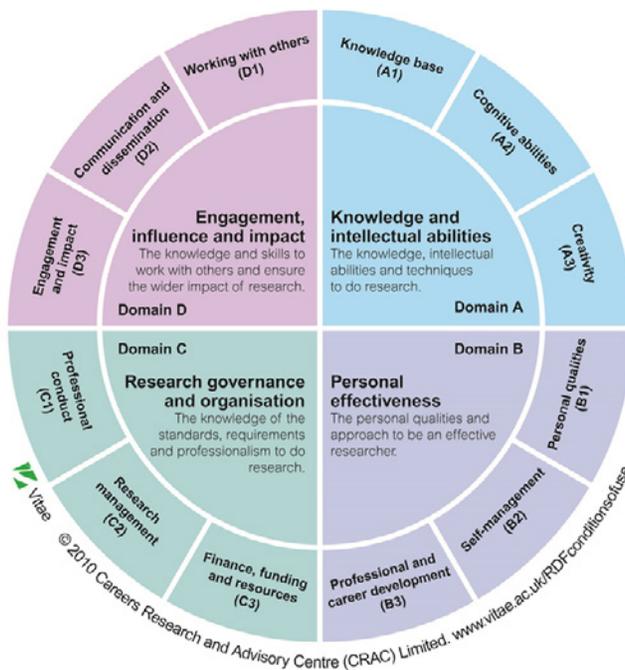


The four Domains of the RDF Planning Wheel identify the capabilities of leading researchers, and provide the structure for the University's student training and development programme:

- Knowledge and Intellectual Abilities;

- Personal Effectiveness;

- Research Governance and Organisation; and

- Engagement, Influence and Impact.

There is a Vitae RDF development and training portfolio management tool for which we have user licences. However, the RDF tool as opposed to the overall diagnostic concept has not been well-liked and we are therefore not actively promoting use.

Students need to engage in development activities from the four Domains throughout the timeline of their programme.

To support student's development, Supervisors should:

- Ensure a structured framework and approach to training and development;

- Be aware of relevant training and learning opportunities;

- Highlight any appropriate taught masters modules;

- Encourage attendance at LSBU events, and events beyond LSBU, engaging students into the wider researcher community;

- Encourage networking and where relevant, make professional introductions;

- Work with Postgraduate Director of Research to provide teaching opportunities for the student where appropriate;

- Encourage development that goes beyond the direct remit of technical skills relevant to the project;

- Ensure all activities are embedded in the plan of work.

### 10.4.2 Supporting student publication and conference attendance

Supervisors should help students gain a wider and more in-depth understanding of their topic through sharing their research within the School and research community. This involves attending conferences, talks, debates, and other internal and external activities where there will be a large mix of individuals with different skills and roles.

The University policy regarding conference funding for students is designed to support student development and enhance the University's research reputation.

Students should also be encouraged to write joint papers with Supervisors and other academics.

It is not compulsory that students produce published outputs and the importance is discipline dependent. Where research findings are commercially sensitive or have high potential for patenting or Intellectual Property development, then data dissemination restrictions should be considered.

A Supervisor's role is critical in fostering writing as the benefits to the student from publishing are considerable. Students should be encouraged to publish in peer review journals, especially within the timeframe of the PhD, by promoting the key benefits:

- Validates the quality and timeliness of the research and strengthens the student's prospects of success in the viva;

- Catalyses a successful career in research/academia. A PhD is a crucial first step but high quality publications are essential for students looking to become Post-Docs/Academics. In the UK, a key driver of research publications is the Research Excellence Framework (REF);

- Provides a lasting legacy. The readership of a thesis rarely stretches into double figures, whilst a publication can be read widely, in perpetuity, to the world;

- Raises the professional profile of the researcher. Quality publications, along with conferences, are pivotal for promoting a student's research to the international academic community;

- Provides material that can be fed in a timely manner directly into a thesis – a paper can readily form the basis of a thesis chapter. Equally, a thesis chapter can often be reframed as a research paper;

- Publications represent tangible outputs from a thesis and are a testament to the quality of the candidate.

For engineering and science students, as soon as the topic is established and the background literature review has been completed, the student can begin to plan their work in terms of publications. The background literature review can itself be the basis of the student's first publication.

Design and creative industries students should consider exhibiting and publicising their project work at the Design Show (or equivalent exhibition) as a timely culmination to an extensive project unless the work is subject to stringent Intellectual Property or confidentiality issues.

Remember that the primary focus for a student is successful and timely completion of the thesis, and they should only publish where this helps completion and future career plans.

## **10.5** Supervising Specific Student groups

### 10.5.1 International students

International students may require additional support. Cultural and higher education system differences may have more impact at doctoral level than at undergraduate. For example, there may be:

• Different concepts of time and importance of punctuality;

• Different interpersonal space norms;

• Religious beliefs and practices which allowances may be required to be made; and

• Difficulties with language, and in particular writing for academic purposes.

Visa requirements mean that fortnightly meetings must be evidenced in HAPLO PGR Manager. The student is responsible for this but Supervisors need to check it has been done.

### 10.5.2 Part-Time students

Part-time students are a diverse population, with a wide age range and a mix of experience in the professional world and in education. The majority of part-time students are either employed or have caring responsibilities, and may live further from the University than full time students. Appreciating these constraints may mean not scheduling meetings in the middle of the day or at short notice.

Departments should encourage a sense of community which will not leave students feeling 'out of touch' with their fellow students. Central events offered multiple times during the year will generally have an evening timing option to be seen to be fair between the needs of full-time and part-time students.

Currently LSBU part time students' submission rates are lower than full-time students. Part-time students need to be aware that though it may appear they have more time to complete their thesis, it takes the same total amount of time as for a full time student. Students should be encouraged to plan further ahead in case any work issues arise which may cause a delay in their research project.

### 10.5.3 Distance learners

Distance learning is only available on a part-time basis and those on this route will have chosen their particular mode of study for convenience. The Research Degrees Code of Practice details the circumstances in which we accept distance learners. LSBU has a mix of distance home

students and international students. Both groups require substantial support and supervision through communication methods which are different from those normally used between Supervisor and student.

Supervisors should confirm at the beginning of the student's programme that distance learners have full access to the resources and libraries of their supporting or collaborative University. Consistent contact and good relationships should be maintained with any collaborative or supporting university or organisation.

Technology makes it easier to communicate often, and students and Supervisors should explore the various methods and agree on which works best for them. For example, with different time zones a virtual office hour where you specify a time dedicated to emailing and communicating in other ways to discuss progress and work. The Research Degrees Code of Practice requires substantial contact at least every three months between the student and the UK supervisors, and we recommend a higher frequency.

Nasiri and Mafakheri (2015) argue that spatially and temporally, being at a distance can pose cultural, intellectual, and professional challenges for students, and create additional challenges for successful supervisor and student interactions. They suggest providing a blend of feedback approaches that vary in speed, length, and depth including:

- Short and quick messages for consultative and administrative issues;
- Use of 'track changes' on reports and submissions which require long feedback;
- Exchange of digital audio monologues when in-depth or direct feedback is needed.

Some students will have a tendency to accept suggested track changes, eliminating the scope for constructive follow up and debate. To avoid this problem Supervisors should try to use 'comments' as opposed to direct changes.

## 10.6 Common Supervisory challenges

### 10.6.1 Student not progressing, unsuited to doctoral or postgraduate qualification

Conversations in initial meetings seemed promising; however, the Supervisor has come to believe that the student is lacking the skills and experience, possibly originality, which they require to complete their thesis. The student appears reluctant to implement development recommendations, and though they are following the agreed plan of research, the work presented does not appear to be at the standard required.

## Solution:

This situation should be identified early in the research. Supervisors should discuss the situation with the Director of Postgraduate Research or an experienced Mentor.

A joint discussion can be had in order to allow the student to explain their position with the Director of Studies and another Supervisor from outside the team. At this meeting the expectations of a research student in their first year should be restated, progression so far reviewed, upgrade requirements discussed, and the courses of action at that point in time clarified.

Full meeting detail must be recorded in HAPLO PGR Manager and the notes must cover discussions, possible outcomes and courses of action, and suggested next steps. Supervisors may add information in the private notes section. All follow ups must be formally recorded.

The issue must be highlighted to the School's Director of Postgraduate Research who should be added to the meeting note record in HAPLO PGR Manager. Though they have access anyway, it will highlight a potentially serious student issue for them.

After careful consideration, if Supervisors continue to feel that a doctoral qualification is not appropriate for the student then the School's Director of Postgraduate Research should raise the issue at the University Research Board of Study monthly meeting. Assuming the decision is confirmed the Supervisor should inform the student of the recommendation they must switch status permanently (so move from PhD to MPhil) or withdraw. Supervisors should not wait to RES2 stage and failure; it is ethical to resolve the student's position as soon as possible.

### 10.6.2 Life events

Adverse life events may occur during, and may mean a student cannot continue their programme on full time status or may need to 'pause' their programme for a period of time.

## Solution:

Discuss and offer options regarding their programme. Serious issues should include the School Director of Postgraduate Research in the discussions as they can raise procedural matters with Research Board of Study that can grant extenuating circumstances such as interruption/ extension in their studies.

If a student becomes impaired during their study through illness or accident, they should discuss their concerns with the disability and dyslexia service. A named person will work with the student, and liaise with staff, with the permission of the student, to identify reasonable adjustments to be implemented by the University.

### 10.6.3 Problems with the research project

Students may come across problems making it difficult to continue with their project in terms of original research. For instance, they may come across an article with research very similar to theirs.

### Solution:

Discuss jointly all the viable options that can support progression such as changing direction of the work. Their work is not necessarily wasted, and the aim should be to understand how they can integrate this new finding into their current research.

An alternative solution is for the student to attend networking events and engage in new discussions related to their topic and similar areas. This can 'open up' new ideas and support repositioning of the research.

### 10.6.4 Student sees the Supervisor as the problem

At times there may be personality clashes and opposing views on the research which can lead to tension in the Supervisor-student relationship. A student may log a formal complaint.

### Solution:

Don't let it get to a formal complaint. If there are tensions, arrange a full supervisory team meeting with the student plus a mentor as facilitator to discuss how to improve the working relationships. The student gets to speak first!

# Appendixes

# 1 About the London Doctoral Academy

The London Doctoral Academy is an inclusive presentation of the University's ambitious development of doctoral students' research capabilities, and the accompanying professional services and facilities. It provides a focal point, both physical and metaphorical, that underpins the research student experience, and supports the growth of a stronger research community and culture.

The London Doctoral Academy's aim is to nurture the development of the University's doctoral students, creating the professional researchers who will make significant contributions in their future career - whether their ambition is to be a professional researcher, leading academic or work in other roles where research skills are of particular relevance.

It delivers on this ambition with:

- A high quality, vibrant research environment, where doctoral candidates are an integral part of the university's research culture and communities. An environment that supports collaborative and cross-disciplinary working, and a focus on impact;

- A comprehensive research education programme with extensive training on methodologies and subject-specific topics. This is combined with wider professional development programmes and opportunities for both doctoral students and their supervisors;

- Exclusive facilities that support both the social and networking needs and professional meeting spaces for research students;

- Dedicated administrative team to deliver the professional services and an efficient and effective working environment for research students and supervisors;

- Involvement of research students as colleagues with valuable inputs to the governance and activities of the London Doctoral Academy.

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