

York Graduate Research School

Policy on Research Degrees 2024-25

1. Introduction	9
Institutional responsibility for PGR programmes	9
School/departmental responsibility for PGR programmes	10
Record keeping	10
Approval of PGR programmes	10
Approval and modification of taught awards and taught components of PGR programmes	11
Four-year and 3.5 year PhD programmes	11
2. The criteria for the award of PGR degrees	12
The descriptor for the award of the degrees of PhD and EngD	12
The descriptor for the award of the degrees of MPhil and MA/MSc (by research)	13
3. The research environment	14
Equality and diversity in appointments	14
Facilities and resources	14
4. Selection, admission and induction of PGRs	15
Induction and handbook	15
5. Supervision	15
Appointment of supervisors	16
Co-supervision	17
Professional development for supervisors	17
Mentoring of inexperienced supervisors	18
Formal and informal supervisory meetings: nature, frequency and recording	19
Providing feedback on, and dealing with challenges to, the supervisory relationship (can also be applied to challenges with the TAP)	19
Review of Supervision route	20
Requesting a change of supervisor	20
Complaints route	20
If a supervisor has concerns about a supervisory relationship	21
Absence and replacement of a supervisor	21
6. Responsibilities of PGRs and supervisors	21
7. Periods of enrolment, changes to PGRs' status and personal circumstances (including illness), working hours and holidays, exceptional circumstances	23
Periods of enrolment and modes of attendance	23
Residence and attendance	25
National security legislation/export control and PGR mobility	26
Early submission	26
Continuation period (see also the section on those who exceed the normal period of enrolment)	26
Extensions of submission deadline (see also the section on those who exceed the normal period of enrolment)	26
PGRs who exceed the normal period of enrolment with permission	27
Absence due to illness or personal reasons and leave of absence	27

Maternity, paternity and adoption leave	28
Emergency and compassionate leave	28
Repeat study	28
Transfer of programme (internal to York)	28
Transfer between departments	28
Transfer of programme level	28
Transfer of programme duration	29
Requesting a leave of absence, extension of submission deadline, or transfer of programme	29
Working hours, employment and voluntary work	29
Holidays/annual leave	30
Transferring into or out of the University of York	30
Transfer from York	30
Transfer to York	30
Entry with advanced standing on the basis of prior experiential learning in research	31
Support to study	31
Exceptional circumstances	31
Assumed withdrawal	32
International PGRs	32
8. Progress and review arrangements	32
Thesis Advisory Panels	32
TAP meetings	33
Raising an issue about a TAP	33
Formal reviews of progress for MPhil, PhD and EngD PGRs	34
Purpose and overview of formal reviews of progress	34
Composition of the progression panel	34
Timing of formal reviews of progress	34
Evidence considered by the progression panel	35
Progression criteria	35
Progress review meetings	35
Second attempt at meeting the criteria	36
Extensions to progression deadlines	36
9. Development of research and other skills	37
Funder-training requirements	37
University-training requirements	37
Professional development planning	37
Departmental training requirements, including taught modules	38
Taught modules	38
Failure to meet departmental training requirements	39
Role of PGRs in teaching and demonstrating	39
10. Evaluation of PGR programmes	39
11. Responsible research and academic integrity	40
Research integrity	40
Ethical approval	40
Academic integrity	40

Use of generative AI	41
Allegations of academic and research misconduct	41
Training for integrity and ethics	42
Data management planning	42
12. Assessment	42
Nature of the thesis	42
Types of thesis	42
Alternative assessment formats for practice-based PGR programmes	43
Requirements for all assessment formats	43
Variation from the approved departmental assessment requirements	43
Submission of the thesis for examination	44
Examiner appointment	44
Independent chair	44
Internal examiners	45
External examiners	45
The role of the supervisor in the examination process	45
Unexaminable theses	45
Requests for confidentiality	45
Requirement for an oral examination	46
MPhil, PhD, EngD	46
MA/MSc (by research)	46
The purpose of the oral examination	46
MPhil, PhD, EngD	46
MA/MSc (by research)	47
Timing and location of the oral examination	47
Off-site oral examinations (all the examination party are physically present but not at York)	48
Hybrid oral examinations (the candidate is physically present but an examiner is remote)	48
Online oral examinations (the candidate is remote)	48
Preparing for and conducting the oral examination	48
Recording the oral examination	49
Non-attendance at the oral examination	49
Compromised oral examination	49
Examination outcomes	49
For PhD and EngD candidates	50
For MPhil candidates	51
For MA/MSc (by research) candidates	51
Completion of examiners' reports	52
Ratification of the examiners' reports and approval of the result	52
Dealing with corrections	52
Deposit of the thesis and conferral of the award	53
Failure to deposit the final version of the thesis	53
Disposal or deposit of research data	53
Disagreement between examiners	53
Revision and resubmission of the thesis	54

Examination following revision and resubmission	54
13. Dissemination of research results, intellectual property rights and responsibilities	55
Open research	55
Embargo and redaction policy	56
Copyright of thesis	57
Contractual responsibilities to external organisations	57
14. PGR complaints and appeals	57
15. Research away from York (excluding PGRs on distance learning PGR programmes)	57
PGR exchange agreements	58
PGR programmes delivered in collaboration with others	58
Arrangements involving industry for individual York PGRs	58
Arrangements involving academic institutions for individual York PGRs	59
External supervision and limited external academic input	59
Outgoing visiting PGRs	59
Arrangements involving other academic institutions at programme level	59
Academic input from one or more partner institutions leading to a University of York award only	59
Double and joint PhD programmes	59
16. Arrangements for non-York PGRs	60
Supervision of individual non-York PGRs by York academics	60
Incoming visiting PGRs	60
Programme level academic input from York that does not lead to a University of York award	60
Appendix 1: Policy on the recording of second progress review meetings and oral examinations for research degrees	61
Purpose of the recording	61
Responsibility for recordings	61
Notification of external examiners in the case of oral examinations	61
Notification of PGRs	61
Equipment including the use of back-up recording devices/methods	61
Connection problems when video-conferencing	62
Failure of recording	62
Recording the examination	62
Storage of recordings	63
Status of the recordings	63
Use of the recording in the event of appeal	63
Exceptional use of an independent observer in place of an recording	64
Appendix 2: Policy on PhD/EngD and MPhil PGR Progression	65
Formal reviews of progress: purpose	65
Formal reviews of progress: key elements	65
Overview of the process	65
University progression criteria	66
Progression panels	67
Timing of the review process	68
Guidance for PGRs	69
Evidence from the PGR	69

Supervisor’s report	70
Progress review meetings	71
Full or partial integration of TAP and progression meetings	71
Notification of progression decisions	72
Second attempt	72
Entry into a continuation period	74
Exceptional circumstances, including extension of progression deadlines	75
Appendix 3: PGR Academic Misconduct Policy	76
1. Scope	76
2. The forms of assessment misconduct dealt with by this policy	76
3. General principles	77
Standard of proof	77
Responsibility of the PGR	77
Sufficient acknowledgement of sources	77
Improving of assessed work by third parties prior to submission	78
Academic judgement in relation to PGR assessment misconduct	78
Decisions that involve academic judgement	79
Decisions that do not normally require academic judgement	79
Exceptional Circumstances	79
Failure to detect academic misconduct in the past	79
PGR Assessment Misconduct Investigation Panels (PGR AMIPs)	80
4. The Assessment Misconduct procedures	80
Possible action following the submission of a PGR statement to, or interview with, the investigatory panel	83
5. PGR Academic Misconduct Penalties	83
6. Composition, responsibilities and procedures relating to PGR AMIPs	85
7. Appeals and case reviews	86
8. Where academic misconduct is alleged but not proven	86
9. Academic misconduct alleged after the examination has taken place	86
Appendix 4: Paid Parental Leave and Emergency and Compassionate Leave Policy	90
Policy on Paid Parental Leave	90
Introduction	90
Standing of policy	90
Definitions and eligibility	90
Payment terms	92
Applying for paid parental leave	93
Policy on Emergency and Compassionate Leave	93
Standard emergency and compassionate leave	94
Paid emergency and compassionate leave	94
Bereaved parent leave	94
Emergency and Compassionate Leave Policy: evidence	95
Appendix 5: Policy Framework for Distance Learning PGR Programmes	96
Introduction	96
Approval process	96

Programme details	96
Duration	96
Naming convention and final award	96
Admission requirements and process	97
Information	97
Requirements for attendance at York	97
Supervision	98
Monitoring and progression	98
Research community	98
Training and development	98
Access to facilities and resources	99
Examination	99
Transfers	99
Teaching opportunities	99
PGR representation and engagement	99
Quality assurance	100
Management of distance learning PGR programmes	100
Checklist for distance learning PGR interviews	100
Distance learning PGR offer letters	101
Appendix 6: Policy Framework for Collaborative Off-site and Collaborative Split-site PGR Programmes	102
Introduction	102
The nature and purpose of collaborative off-site and split-site PhD programmes	102
Advantages of collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs	103
Key considerations in choosing a partner	104
Approval process and fees	104
Programme details	104
Duration	104
Naming convention and final award	104
PGR agreements	104
Multiple off-site or split-site PhDs with the same partner	105
Suitability of the partner's research environment	105
Data sharing and initial intellectual property (IP) agreement	105
PGR status and enrolment	105
Admission requirements and process	105
Information	106
Requirements for attendance at York	106
Appointment of supervisors, co-supervisors and pastoral advisers/mentors	107
Supervision	107
Monitoring and progression	108
Research community	108
Training and development	108
Access to facilities and resources	108
Examination	108
Transfers	109

Teaching opportunities	109
PGR representation and engagement	109
Complaints and appeals	109
Quality assurance	109
Appendix 7: Policy Framework for Integrated PhD Programmes	110
Introduction	110
The nature and purpose of the Integrated PhD	110
Approval process	110
Programme details	110
Structure and duration	110
Naming convention and final award	111
Admission requirements and process	111
Entry points and timing of arrival in York	111
Recognition of prior learning	112
Information	112
PGR status	112
Design of the academic programme	112
Integrated studies year	112
Taught element	112
Research element	113
PhD research project	113
Supervision	114
Monitoring and progression	114
Progression from the integrated studies year	114
Progression post integrated studies year	115
PGR representation and engagement	115
Quality assurance	115
Management of Integrated PhD programmes	115
Eligibility for a taught Masters	115
Research element assessment details, including model pass/fail criteria	115
Appendix 8: Policy and process for the appointment of examiners for research degrees	118
Process for the appointment of examiners	118
Considerations in the appointment of external examiners	118
Numbers of candidates examined	120
Considerations in the appointment of internal examiners	120
Appendix 9: Guidance for Examiners on Degree Outcomes	122
Appendix 10: Policy on Transparency of Authorship in PGR Programmes, including generative AI, proofreading and translation	124
1. Key Principles	124
2. Scope of this policy	124
3. Assistance from the supervisory team and other staff members	125
4. Assistance from third parties	125
5. Institutional advice and assistance	126
6. Peer support	126

7. Permissible proofreading and editing assistance	126
8. Unacceptable assistance	127
9. Acknowledgement of proofreading or editing assistance	127
10. Acknowledgement of collaborative writing in a journal-style thesis	128
11. Using a proofreader	128
Appendix 11: Policy on Granting PGR Programme Extensions in Exceptional Circumstances	129
Programme extension requests	129
Progression Extensions and Leave of Absence requests	129
Circumstances that are exceptional and may be grounds for an extension	129
Circumstances that are not normally exceptional and not normally grounds for an extension	130
Circumstances that do not provide grounds for an extension	130
Evidence	131

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Policy on Research Degrees (PoRD) sets out University policy on postgraduate research degree (PGR) programmes for postgraduate researchers (hereafter referred to as PGRs), supervisors of PGRs and members of Thesis Advisory Panels, Progression Panels, examiners of research degrees, and other University staff with responsibility for PGRs.
- 1.2 This Policy has been drawn up with reference to the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Advice and Guidance: Research Degrees (2018). York Graduate Research School (YGRS) is responsible for implementing the PoRD and reviewing it on an annual basis.
- 1.3 This Policy supplements, but does not supersede, the University's regulations for PGR awards ([Regulation 2](#)).
- 1.4 This Policy applies to the degrees of PhD, EngD, MPhil, MA (by research) and MSc (by research). The PhD by Publication option for members of staff is detailed separately in the University's regulations (Regulation 2.9). Therefore, this policy refers to all PGRs unless otherwise stated.
- 1.5 There are additional regulations that apply to:
- PGR programmes by distance learning: Appendix 5
 - Collaborative split-site and off-site PhDs: Appendix 6
 - Integrated PhD programmes: Appendix 7.

Institutional responsibility for PGR programmes

- 1.6 York Graduate Research School (YGRS) is responsible for postgraduate research (PGR) provision at the University of York. York Graduate Research School Board (YGRSB) - which reports via University Research Committee to Senate - is responsible for overseeing the work of YGRS. YGRSB has two sub-committees: PGR Policies and Programme Committee (PPPC) (to assure the standards of PGR programmes, and to monitor and promote the enhancement of the quality of the academic experience of PGRs), and PGR Experience Committee (to coordinate and oversee matters relating to the support and personal and professional development of PGRs and to promote a vibrant community of PGRs). YGRS also works closely with the Standing Committee on Assessment (SCA).
- 1.7 YGRS has a Dean who can take decisions on behalf of YGRS as set out in this policy and as Chair of YGRSB and PPPC. Where the Dean is unavailable, a PGR Faculty Lead or PVC Research can be asked to deputise.
- 1.8 YGRS monitors PGRs and PGR programmes through:
- (i) the consideration of a range of statistical data (where appropriate analysed by department and demographic factors) including:
 - Postgraduate Research Student Experience (PRES) survey data (when available)
 - formal supervision meeting and TAP meeting compliance rates (from PGRA)
 - rates of progression at the first and second attempt (from PGRA)
 - submission and completion times and rates (from the SIA and PGRA)
 - pass, referral, fail and withdrawal rates (from PGRA)
 - appeals and complaints (from Special Cases)
 - data provided by the students' union.
 - (ii) Annual Review and other University review processes, which include explicit consideration of PGRs and PGR programmes.

1.9 Operational *institutional* responsibility for PGRs and PGR programmes is as follows:

Area	Office
Recruitment and Admissions	Marketing, Recruitment, Admission and Outreach (MRAO)
Supporting the PGR journey from enrolment through progression to final examination and award	PGR Administration (PGRA)
PGR programme approval, monitoring and review	PGRA
Central PGR induction and training	Building Research and Innovation Capacity (BRIC) Team
Training for Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs)	Academic Practice
Research policy framework	Policy, Integrity and Performance team (PIP)
Research ethics	University Research Committee (URC) and disciplinary Research Ethics Committees
Central training for PGR supervisors	BRIC Team

School/departmental responsibility for PGR programmes

- 1.10 Within a school, department or centre (as applicable), the research committee has oversight of all research in the department, while responsibility for PGRs and PGR programmes rests with the Board of Studies, although in many schools/departments/centres responsibility is delegated from the Board of Studies to a Graduate School Board (or equivalent) led by a Graduate Chair. In the rest of the document, 'department' is used to represent a PGR's home school/department/centre, and Graduate School Board (GSB)/Graduate Chair is used to represent whichever school/departmental/centre committee or individual has formal responsibility (either directly or under delegated powers) for PGRs and PGR programmes.
- 1.11 Where a department is required to approve key decisions impacting PGRs (e.g. for awards, PGR special cases) this should be undertaken within 7 working days to ensure that decisions can be communicated to PGRs in good time. The Graduate Chair (or other individual with departmental responsibility for PGRs) must have a formally designated alternate who can take decisions in their absence. If the Graduate Chair and their alternate will be absent for more than 7 working days then the department should nominate a further alternative (e.g. Head of Department, Chair of Board of Studies).

Record keeping

- 1.12 PGRs, their department and the University are responsible for maintaining records relating to a PGR's programme, including supervision, progress and training. The primary system used to maintain such records is SkillsForge and PGRs and their supervisors are required to engage with this.

Approval of PGR programmes

- 1.13 All new PGR programmes must be approved by the relevant Graduate School Board. They also require [planning and academic approval at University level](#). Academic approval is undertaken by PPPC on behalf of YGRSB.
- 1.14 All PhD programmes must have an MPhil *and* an MA (by research) and/or MSc (by research) available

as transfer and exit awards. All MPhil programmes must have an MA (by research) and/or MSc (by research) available as transfer and exit awards.

- 1.15 Most PGR programmes should have a start date aligned with the start of the first semester. Additional start dates may be approved by PPPC and should be on the first of the month).
- 1.16 Where a department is planning to bid for a Doctoral Landscape Aware or Doctoral Focal Award or similar (as lead or member institution), the University approval stage (i.e. planning and academic) for any associated PGR programme should run in parallel with the initial drafting of the bid in order to identify and address any issues early on in the process and build up staff expertise and cooperation.
- 1.17 For approval, the relevant new programme pro forma must be submitted with the required supporting documentation, which may include comments (on the relevant pro forma) from an external assessor. The Chair of PPPC may decide that comments from an external assessor are not required, e.g. if the programme has already undergone external review as part of a bid to a research council or other sponsor/funding body.
- 1.18 Modifications to PGR programmes require departmental approval and, in the case of major modifications (including significant changes to progression processes and departmental training requirements), University academic (and sometimes planning) approval.

Approval and modification of taught awards and taught components of PGR programmes

- 1.19 PGRs who embark on a PGR programme at the University may be eligible to receive a taught award in two circumstances – as an integrated taught award, or as an exit taught award.
- 1.20 An ‘integrated taught award’ means that a PGR is required to enrol on a taught programme (eg a Postgraduate Certificate or Diploma) alongside their PGR programme for training purposes. A PGR who successfully completes the taught programme and the PGR programme receives an integrated award. A PGR who successfully completes just the taught programme will receive the taught award as an exit award. PGRs who fail to complete the taught programme may be able to transfer to another (non-integrated) PGR programme.
- 1.21 An ‘exit taught award’ is conferred when PGRs who have successfully completed sufficient credit-bearing modules, taken for training purposes, to be eligible for a taught award (eg a Postgraduate Certificate) withdraw, have their enrolment terminated or are not awarded a PGR degree on final examination. PGRs only receive an exit taught award if they do not receive a PGR degree.
- 1.22 Integrated/exit taught awards for PGRs must align with the institutional frameworks for programme design and be presented on the standard new programme documentation for taught awards. Modules contributing to additional/exit taught awards should be on the module catalogue. The standard taught programme design and assessment rules apply to additional/exit taught awards and such programmes must be overseen by an external examiner in line with standard procedures for taught programmes.
- 1.23 Integrated/exit taught awards should follow the standard approval procedure for new taught programmes. Once a programme has received planning and FLTG approval, PPPC should approve the incorporation of the programme into a named PGR programme as an integrated/exist taught award. Modifications to integrated taught/exit taught awards for PGRs should be approved by the relevant Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching, and then the Dean of YGRS.

Four-year and 3.5 year PhD programmes

- 1.24 Departments can propose four-year and 3.5 year PhD programmes (and part-time equivalents), in addition to their existing three-year PhD programme(s). PGRs may be admitted to a four-year or 3.5

year PhD programme only if the programme has the necessary approval. The University recognises two distinct types of four-year PhD programmes: (i) four-year PhD programmes and (ii) Integrated PhD programmes.

- 1.25 Four-year and 3.5 year PhD programmes are normally developed in response to the requirements of research councils and other funding bodies. The longer duration may recognise the time that PGRs are required to spend on additional activities (i.e. those not primarily directed towards research or thesis preparation) and/or reflect the funder's desire that PGRs should submit within the funded period (whilst recognising that this may not be possible within a three-year period). Four-year and 3.5 year PhD programmes are similar to the University's standard three-year PhD programmes but with a different normal and minimum period of enrolment (see section 7). Four-year and 3.5 year PhD programmes do not normally have a continuation year (see section 7).
- 1.26 Integrated PhD programmes are often developed in response to particular departmental needs, namely to facilitate the admission of those who meet the University's minimum PhD admission requirements and demonstrate the potential to undertake a PhD but whose educational background means they are unsuited to a three-year PhD programme (e.g. they are moving between disciplines or their Master's programme did not provide the right academic preparation for PhD work). Integrated PhD programmes have their own policy framework (see Appendix 7).

2. The criteria for the award of PGR degrees

- 2.1 The degrees of PhD, EngD, MPhil and MA/MSc (by research) are all obtained by research and are assessed through the submission of a thesis (or equivalent) and, in the majority of cases, an oral examination.
- 2.2 The degrees of PhD and EngD are Doctoral degrees (level 8 of *The Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in Degree-Awarding Bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ), and third cycle (Doctoral) qualifications within *A Framework for Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area* (QF-EHEA)).
- 2.3 The degrees of MPhil and MA/MSc (by research) are Master's degrees (level 7 of the FHEQ, and second cycle qualifications within the QF-EHEA).
- 2.4 A thesis will be a piece of work which a capable, well-qualified and diligent PGR, who is properly supported and supervised, can complete successfully within the normal period of enrolment for the degree in question.

The descriptor for the award of the degrees of PhD and EngD

- 2.5 The degrees of PhD or EngD are awarded to PGRs who have demonstrated all of the following:
- the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research or other advanced scholarship, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline, and merit publication;
 - systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
 - the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
 - a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- make informed judgements on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- continue to undertake pure and/or applied research and development at an advanced level, contributing substantially to the development of new techniques, ideas or approaches;

and will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring the exercise of personal responsibility and largely autonomous initiative in complex and unpredictable situations, in professional or equivalent environments.

2.6 A PhD or EngD thesis (or equivalent) must contain a substantial original contribution to knowledge or understanding.

The descriptor for the award of the degrees of MPhil and MA/MSc (by research)

2.7 The degrees of MPhil and MA/MSc (by research) are awarded to PGRs who have demonstrated:

- a systematic understanding of knowledge, and a critical awareness of current problems and/or new insights, much of which is at, or informed by, the forefront of their academic discipline, field of study, or area of professional practice;
- a comprehensive understanding of techniques available to their own research or advanced scholarship;
- originality in the application of knowledge, together with a practical understanding of how established techniques of research and enquiry are used to create and interpret knowledge in the discipline;
- conceptual understanding that enables the PGR:
 - to evaluate critically current research and advanced scholarship in the discipline; and
 - to evaluate methodologies and develop critiques of them and, where appropriate, to propose new hypotheses;
- the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of knowledge, applications or understanding of the discipline. [This is a York-specific addition to the FHEQ's descriptor for Master's level programmes.]

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- deal with complex issues both systematically and creatively, make sound judgements in the absence of complete data, and communicate their conclusions clearly to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- demonstrate self-direction and originality in tackling and solving problems, and act autonomously in planning and implementing tasks at a professional or equivalent level;
- continue to advance their knowledge and understanding, and to develop new skills to a high level;

and will have:

- the qualities and transferable skills necessary for employment requiring:
 - the exercise of initiative and personal responsibility;
 - decision-making in complex and unpredictable situations; and
 - the independent learning ability required for continuing professional development.

2.8 The MPhil is a degree of considerable distinction in its own right and an MPhil thesis (or equivalent) is

expected to display a good general knowledge of the field of study, a comprehensive knowledge of some part or aspect of the field of study, and a recognisable original contribution to knowledge or understanding.

3. The research environment

- 3.1 The University of York is a leading research-intensive institution, with national and international recognition, and an excellent track record in the UK's Research Excellence Framework. The University aims to build on its previous success through its Research Strategy, which is overseen by the University's Research Committee.
- 3.2 The University is committed to the highest standards of research integrity within its research community, maintained with reference to a framework of University policies (including the Code of practice and principles for good ethical governance, the Code of Practice on Research Integrity and the Research Data Management Policy as well as legal and funder frameworks.
- 3.3 PGRs are provided with an appropriate research environment, that is: (i) where excellent research, recognised by the relevant subject community, is occurring and, (ii) where appropriate support is provided for engaging in, and learning about, research.
- 3.4 The University assures itself that departments are providing an appropriate research environment by: (i) YGRS's consideration of Annual Review reports and URC's consideration of Annual Departmental Research Review reports from departments, and, (ii) monitoring, by YGRS, of the PGR experience. The University will take action to address any identified weaknesses.
- 3.5 A department, through its Graduate School Board, should assure itself that it can provide an appropriate research environment by considering whether for an individual PGR:
- appropriate supervision of the proposed research topic can be provided by existing members of staff
 - there are sufficient numbers of PGRs and high calibre research-active staff in the PGR's chosen field and related areas
 - there is an active, collegial research community to support the PGR, for example in terms of the provision of regular research seminars etc.
 - the necessary facilities and training etc. to support the PGR can be provided.

Equality and diversity in appointments

- 3.6 Where possible (recognising the challenges associated with the small number of individuals involved, particularly with respect to supervision and the examination process), departments should consider issues of equality, diversity and inclusion when considering the composition of admissions panels, supervisory teams, thesis advisory panels, progression panels and the appointment of examiners.

Facilities and resources

- 3.7 Departments (working in conjunction with the relevant central services, e.g. Student Administration and Academic Affairs, Humanities Research Centre and Research Centre for Social Sciences) are responsible for ensuring that PGRs have the facilities and resources they need to pursue their approved research. Guidance on the facilities and resources provided should be included in the department's PGR handbook. Departments are also responsible for ensuring that PGRs undertaking work away from the University (e.g. fieldwork and research visits) have the facilities and resources they need.

- 3.8 Facilities and resources should normally include: (i) access to photocopying, and printing, (ii) library resources (including training and relevant electronic resources), (iii) appropriate computing provision for their research project (hardware, software, training and support), and (iv) where relevant (e.g. for laboratory-based subjects), access to specialist facilities and materials and/or technical support. Departments should also ensure that there is a well-publicised, equitable and transparent procedure for allocating funding for conference attendance.

4. Selection, admission and induction of PGRs

- 4.1 The selection and admission of PGRs to PGR programmes must be undertaken in accordance with the University's Admissions Policy and the Code of Practice on the Recruitment, Selection and Admission of PGRs which are reviewed and updated annually by MRAO in consultation with YGRS. The Admissions Policy and Code of Practice are designed to ensure that: (i) the decision-making process is clear, consistent, fair, and demonstrates equality of opportunity; and (ii) that only appropriately qualified and prepared applicants, for whom a suitable research environment (see above) can be provided, are admitted to PGR programmes.

Induction and handbook

- 4.2 The main PGR entry point is aligned with the start of the first semester. Other start times (on the first of the month) may be approved by PPPC.
- 4.3 Departments are strongly encouraged to limit the number of entry points to PGR programmes to facilitate the participation of new PGRs in University, student union and departmental induction and training events, and to ensure that PGRs feel part of a cohort.
- 4.4 The University, together with the students' union, provides induction events for PGRs, at the start of the first and second semester. PGRs are expected to attend the University induction relevant to their start date. See section 11 for training requirements that form part of the University's induction process.
- 4.5 Departments should provide a comprehensive induction programme for all new PGRs (including those who do not commence their studies at the start of the academic year, are part-time or working at a distance) that dovetails with the central provision. Induction content should be planned with reference to the Induction Checklist issued by YGRS, and should include departmental-specific information on supervisory arrangements, research and skills training, networking opportunities, facilities, good research conduct, and health and safety, including (where appropriate) health and safety while undertaking work away from the University (e.g. fieldwork and research visits). 'Induction' requirements should be considered as a whole, not simply as an activity for the first few weeks of the PGR's programme.
- 4.6 Departments should provide new PGRs with an appropriate handbook for reference. This handbook should be created using the in order to ensure consistency and accuracy of messaging to all new PGRs.

5. Supervision

- 5.1 Supervisors play a fundamental role in supporting PGRs throughout their studies. The University recognises, however, that the exact nature of the supervisory process will vary depending on the academic discipline and associated research environment.
- 5.2 Supervisors are bound by the Statement on Research Performance Expectations and the Personal Relationships Policy.

Appointment of supervisors

- 5.3 Each PGR must have a designated main supervisor who is their first point of contact (this applies even if supervisors consider themselves to be joint supervisors).
- 5.4 Departments are encouraged, where practicable, to appoint a supervisory team i.e. to appoint one or more co-supervisors in addition to the main supervisor. A co-supervisor:
- must be appointed when the main supervisor is inexperienced (see below);**
 - should normally be appointed, from a different disciplinary perspective, when research is highly interdisciplinary;
 - should normally be appointed, from the partner department, when research is being conducted across departments;
 - will often be appointed, from an external partner, when research is being conducted across institutions, or is based in industry (or other non-academic partner) or professional practice;
 - may be appointed to bring particular knowledge, skill or experience to a supervisory team and/or to serve a particular role e.g. to provide pastoral support.
- 5.5 The main supervisor plus any co-supervisors are appointed by the Head of Department (or their delegate), in consultation with the Graduate Chair. The academic judgement as to whether any supervisory arrangement (e.g. number of supervisors, the fit between a supervisor's area of research and that of their supervisee etc.) is adequate for the PGR's research project ultimately rests with the Graduate School Board. Departments should, if possible, avoid appointing a main and co-supervisor who are in a close personal relationship.
- 5.6 The main supervisor should be a member of the University's Academic or Research staff (i.e. on a Teaching and Research, or Research, contract) (including probationary staff) at a minimum of grade 7 (lecturer/research fellow) and on a permanent contract *or* a fixed-term contract that extends beyond the expected completion date of the PGR's programme (and who has not committed to leave the University's employment before the PGR's expected completion date). Where appropriate, the Head of Department may appoint as a main supervisor a member of Teaching staff (i.e. on a Teaching and Scholarship contract - note that any papers co-authored between a PGR and a member of Teaching staff may not be REF-able, seek up to date advice from PIP) or a member of Academic, Research or Teaching staff at grade 6 (associate lecturer equivalent).
- 5.7 If a main supervisor retires, they may continue as a co-supervisor for any current supervisees if: (i) a new main supervisor is appointed, and (ii) the retiree holds an emeritus/honorary appointment and their expertise remains valid. If a main supervisor moves to another institution, they may continue as a co-supervisor for any current supervisees if a new main supervisor is appointed.
- 5.8 The main supervisor or supervisory team must have an appropriate level of expertise to supervise the research being undertaken by their supervisee. This does not necessarily require the supervisor(s) to be experts in their supervisee's *specific* topic of research.
- 5.9 The ability of supervisors to meet their supervisory responsibilities should not be put at risk as a result of an excessive volume or range of other responsibilities.
- 5.10 The following are eligible to serve as co-supervisors but not as main supervisors: research fellows (who do not meet the requirements to serve as a main supervisor), emeritus and honorary academic staff at the University of York; academic staff based in other academic institutions; researchers based in industry (or other non-academic partners) or professional practice.

Co-supervision

- 5.11 Co-supervision may involve two or more supervisors having near-equal responsibility for a PGR (often called joint co-supervision) or an unequal split of responsibilities (e.g. where the subsidiary co-supervisor oversees a PGR's professional development, or a particular aspect of their project).
- 5.12 The respective roles and responsibilities of members of a supervisory team (e.g. attendance at supervisory meetings, information-sharing, giving feedback on the PGR's work) and the PGR should be discussed and agreed at the outset. Decisions should be reviewed, and if necessary revised, over time. All decisions should be recorded in SkillsForge. Departments may find it helpful to have a document to guide the discussion and agreement process.
- 5.13 Where a co-supervisor is appointed from another department/centre within the University, it is recommended that the fees are split as follows: 20% to the lead department/centre (i.e. the one administering the PGR), and the remainder of the fees split between the supervising departments/centres in line with the supervisory load.
- 5.14 Where there is a change of supervisor (see below) or change of supervisory role (e.g. from main to co-supervisor, see below) all parties need to agree and record in SkillsForge how the change will work in practice (e.g. clear expectations around participation in supervisory meetings).

Professional development for supervisors

- 5.15 The University has a duty of care to its PGRs, to ensure that they are provided with supervision that meets their needs, and to its supervisors, to ensure that they are prepared for this challenging role. The University discharges this duty of care through its expectation for supervisors to undertake professional development, in the form of supported experiential learning and a mandatory online tutorial. Those with less supervisory experience have more extensive professional development requirements and also serve an informal 'supervisory probation' period until they have supported - as a main supervisor - a York PhD PGR through to successful completion.
- 5.16 Departments should ensure that staff who are new to an academic career are given opportunities to gain experience of the supervisory process through serving on Thesis Advisory Panels and as co-supervisors. Postdocs are encouraged to train as a PGR mentor on the [University PGR Mentoring Scheme](#).
- 5.17 For the purpose of the professional development section of this policy ONLY (i.e. separate rules apply to the requirement around the mentoring of inexperienced supervisors), a supervisor may be defined as a 'new supervisor' if they have not - as a main supervisor - overseen a PhD PGR through to successful completion at any institution within the UK/Ireland; a 'supervisor new to York' if they have not - as a main supervisor - overseen a PhD PGR through to successful completion at the University of York but have done so at another institution within the UK/Ireland; or an 'experienced supervisor' if they have - as a main supervisor - overseen at least one PhD PGR through to successful completion at the University of York.
- 5.18 New supervisors (whether serving in a main or co-supervisor role) are required to undertake professional development as follows:
- Mandatory completion of the Becoming an Effective Research Supervisor (BERST) online tutorial before starting to supervise, with a refresher every three years; *AND*
 - Expected participation in at least one PGR supervisor workshop offered by BRIC or suitable alternative (supervisors may wish to seek advice from their Graduate Chair about the appropriateness of any session) before starting to supervise, and every year thereafter until they have supervised a PhD PGR through to successful completion as a main supervisor; *AND*

- Strongly recommended participation in a PGR supervisory community of practice (CoP) and/or a departmental PGR supervisor mentoring scheme (as a mentee) until they have supervised a PhD PGR through to successful completion as a main supervisor.
- 5.19 Supervisors new to York (whether serving in a main or co-supervisor role) are required to undertake professional development as follows:
- Mandatory completion of the BERST online tutorial before starting to supervise at the University of York, with a refresher every three years; *AND*
 - Expected participation in at least one of the following, at least once every three years: i. a PGR supervisor workshop offered by BRIC or suitable alternative (supervisors may wish to seek advice from their Graduate Chair about the appropriateness of any session); ii. a PGR supervisory Community of Practice shared practice meeting; iii. a departmental PGR supervisor mentoring scheme (as a mentee or mentor).
- 5.20 Experienced supervisors (whether serving in a main or co-supervisor role) are required to undertake professional development as follows:
- Mandatory completion of the BERST online tutorial, with a refresher every three years; *AND*
 - Expected participation in *at least* one of the following, *at least* once every three years: i. a PGR supervisor workshop offered by BRIC (or suitable alternative); ii. a PGR supervisory Community of Practice shared practice meeting; iii. a departmental PGR supervisor mentoring scheme (as a mentor).
- 5.21 Departments should monitor the completion of mandatory and expected professional development activities by supervisors. If a supervisor does not complete a **mandatory** professional development activity, the Graduate Chair should intervene and if necessary refer the matter to the Head of Department for action with reference to the [Statement of Research Performance Expectations](#). If a supervisor does not complete an **expected** professional development activity this should be addressed through the performance review process.
- 5.22 Supervisors external to the University of York based in industry or similar are encouraged to complete the BERST online tutorial, with a refresher every three years. Supervisors external to the University of York based in other academic institutions are encouraged - or, depending on the nature of the arrangement, may be required - to complete the BERST online tutorial, with a refresher every three years. Completion - where required - should be overseen by the York supervisor, with any issues being referred to the Graduate Chair.

Mentoring of inexperienced supervisors

- 5.23 A main supervisor who has not yet overseen - as a main or joint co-supervisor - a PGR through to successful completion of a PGR programme at the same or higher level* must be supported by an experienced co-supervisor. (*Eg a individual who has - as a main or joint co-supervisor - overseen the successful completion of an MA/MSc (by research) PGR would still require an experienced co-supervisor when supervising a PhD PGR but not when supervising additional MA/MSc (by research) PGRs.)
- 5.24 The purpose of the experienced co-supervisor is to serve as an advisor/mentor to the inexperienced supervisor and provide additional supervisory support to the PGR. The experienced co-supervisor should be a member of University staff (as set out above) and have a track record of successful PhD supervision.
- 5.25 The co-supervision model should be agreed, on a case by case basis, between the main supervisor, the experienced co-supervisor and the Graduate Chair, taking into account the development needs of the inexperienced supervisor and the supervisory needs of the PGR. The co-supervision model should be constant for an individual PGR to avoid disrupting their experience but may vary between individual

PGRs as, over time, the inexperienced supervisor develops their supervisory practice and confidence. The experienced co-supervisor must attend TAP meetings and contribute to the supervisor's report for formal reviews of progress.

Formal and informal supervisory meetings: nature, frequency and recording

- 5.26 The purpose and likely frequency of supervisory meetings, both formal and informal, at different stages of the PGR programme, should be made clear to the PGR by the supervisor, at the departmental induction at the outset of the programme, and in the department's PGR handbook. PGRs and supervisors are jointly responsible for ensuring that regular and frequent contact is maintained and both parties should feel able to take the initiative when necessary. A meeting with the supervisor, if requested by the PGR, should normally take place within one week.
- 5.27 **Formal supervisory meetings**, at which substantial discussion of, and feedback on, research progress and plans and a conversation about development and training needs take place, are vital for ensuring that a PGR's research project remains on target. Formal supervision meetings must be held at least every 6-7 weeks throughout the enrolment year for both full-time and part-time PGRs (including visiting PGRs) during the normal enrolment period (see section 7 for formal supervisory meetings beyond the normal enrolment period) and more frequently if a Graduate School Board prescribes. This equates to a minimum of eight formal supervision meetings per enrolment year. This requirement may only be temporarily waived by the Graduate School Board of the department concerned where the PGR is absent on academic grounds *and* unable (e.g. due to the fieldwork location) to participate in a supervisory meeting by alternative means, normally video-conferencing.
- 5.28 Formal supervisory meetings should normally be held in person (unless a PGR is on an approved distance learning programme, or on an approved collaborative programme that requires residence away from York, or they are undertaking an approved period away from York (for example, for data collection, placement or mobility period)).
- 5.29 A record of each formal supervisory meeting should be drawn up by the PGR, approved by the supervisor(s), and saved on SkillsForge, in order to be accessible to both. The record should include the date of the meeting, a summary of the content of the meeting and future actions to be performed, including agreed training. The department is ultimately responsible for ensuring that formal supervisory meetings happen on time and are correctly recorded.
- 5.30 There is no University requirement for the frequency of **informal supervision meetings**, although this may be prescribed by a department. In practice, the frequency of informal supervision meetings will depend on a range of factors including disciplinary and departmental norms, the relationship between the PGR and supervisor(s), and the needs of the PGR. Informal supervisory meetings may be held in person or online as long as all parties are in agreement.

Providing feedback on, and dealing with challenges to, the supervisory relationship (can also be applied to challenges with the TAP)

- 5.31 Sometimes the relationship between a PGR and a supervisor can become strained or, in rare cases, break down. Where a supervisory relationship is not working as well as it might, the PGR and the supervisor are encouraged, in the first instance, to discuss the issue together and attempt to find a resolution. If the PGR feels unable to discuss the issue directly with the supervisor, or the issue remains unresolved having done this, or a discussion would be inappropriate, there are a number of options: (i) review of supervision route, (ii) request to change supervisor, (iii) complaints route. PGRs are reminded that if they have a supervisory issue but do not raise it, action cannot be taken to resolve it.
- 5.32 Whatever the issue, and whatever option a PGR wishes to pursue, the students' union can provide

independent advice and support.

Review of Supervision route

- 5.33 PGRs should feel free to talk confidentially about a supervisory issue with another member of their Thesis Advisory Panel (TAP), the Graduate Chair (or their alternate), or other departmental officer (as set out in the department's PGR handbook).
- 5.34 Towards the end of each TAP meeting (see section 8), the non-supervisory TAP member(s) should encourage the PGR to complete and submit the Review of Supervision form, thereby offering the PGR an opportunity to discuss their supervisory relationship in a safe environment. *The Review of Supervision form can also be completed independently of the TAP process.* Review of Supervision forms are triaged by the department's Graduate Administrator and, where appropriate, sent to the Graduate Chair (or their alternate where the Graduate Chair is the PGR's supervisor) for action.
- 5.35 If a PGR feels unable to flag their concerns within their department (directly or via the Review of Supervision form) they can arrange to speak in confidence to one of the Faculty PGR leads.
- 5.36 When a supervisory issue is raised with a member of staff (directly or via the Review of Supervision form), they will advise the PGR of possible solutions. Some issues may be easily resolved, others may involve an offer of a facilitated discussion between the PGR and the supervisor and/or their department.
- 5.37 PGRs should be reassured that if they raise a supervisory issue in confidence via the Review of Supervision route (including via the Review of Supervision form) that it will not be disclosed to the supervisor concerned without the PGR's explicit written consent, although this may limit the options available for action. Options for action that do not require supervisory disclosure may include interventions that do not target an individual supervisor (e.g. changing departmental policy or providing training for all departmental supervisors) or direct support to the affected PGR (e.g. training to help them address the situation and/or signposting to University or students' union advice and support services).

Requesting a change of supervisor

- 5.38 A PGR can make a request to their department to change supervisor. PGRs may give a reason for their request or make the request on a 'no blame' basis. Departments should endeavour to fulfil reasonable requests (note that this extends only to the request to change, *not* the choice of the replacement supervisor). If a department does not believe there are any ground for a change of supervisor (or that a request is frivolous or vexatious), the case should be referred to the PGR Faculty Lead for arbitration (or the PGR Faculty Lead for another faculty if the PGR is in the Faculty Lead's department).
- 5.39 Occasionally, a PGR may request a change of supervisor but this is not possible due to *unresolvable* expertise or funder/sponsor issues [note that funder/sponsor issues should almost always be resolvable when the funding is from or paid via the University]. In this case, other options should be explored: for example, a department might appoint a new main supervisor and retain the existing supervisor as a co-supervisor (perhaps where that individual has knowledge vital for oversight of the PGR's research project) or appoint additional co-supervisors.

Complaints route

- 5.40 A PGR is entitled to instigate the complaints procedure (see section 14) if they believe they have a case, for example in relation to the adequacy of supervision. There is a specific procedure for raising concerns about staff misconduct, which could include harassment or bullying within a supervisory relationship.

If a supervisor has concerns about a supervisory relationship

- 5.41 If a supervisor is unhappy with their supervisory relationship with their PGR they should attempt to resolve the matter informally in the first instance. If they feel unable to discuss the issue directly with their PGR, or the issue remains unresolved having done this, then they should raise the matter with the Graduate Chair (or alternate).

Absence and replacement of a supervisor

- 5.42 PGRs should be informed who would be their first point of contact if their main supervisor were to be temporarily unavailable. This would normally be the co-supervisor, if one has been appointed, or, if not, another member of their Thesis Advisory Panel.
- 5.43 Heads of Departments should liaise with Graduate Chairs regarding forthcoming resignations from the University, or any likelihood of prolonged absence e.g. for personal reasons, of members of staff with supervisory responsibility for PGRs. Departments should, as soon as practicable, inform PGRs formally in writing if a supervisor resigns or has to step aside, giving information on the arrangements for continued supervision.
- 5.44 In the event of a main supervisor becoming unable to continue supervising a PGR on a permanent or long-term basis, a replacement supervisor should be appointed, after consultation with the PGR, within one month of the main supervisor becoming unavailable. In the meantime, the designated person (see above) should assume the role of the absent supervisor. Appropriate arrangements should also be made where co-supervisors become unable to continue supervising a PGR on a permanent or long-term basis.
- 5.45 During the normal period of enrolment, if a PGR's research project (as agreed on entry) is dependent on the supervision of a *single, specialist* member of academic staff and that individual leaves the University, or is otherwise unable to continue supervising the PGR, then the department must seek to make alternative, comparable arrangements to enable the PGR to complete their research degree. This may involve supporting the PGR's transfer to another institution (see section 7), or it may involve appointing a specialist co-supervisor from another institution (paid for by the department if necessary) so that the PGR can complete their PGR programme at the University of York.
- 5.46 If a PGR wishes to change their research project substantially (and where applicable, this change has been approved by funder/sponsor) such that their allocated supervisor(s) is(are) no longer able to supervise this research, the department should endeavour to find an alternate supervisor(s) in the new research area (either from within the department or another department within the University - the latter may be subject to a transfer of resources to the other department). If that is not possible then the University will not be bound to provide alternative external supervision and the PGR will be advised to transfer to another institution.

6. Responsibilities of PGRs and supervisors

- 6.1 The responsibilities of PGRs include:
- (i) taking responsibility for their own personal and professional development, including, where possible, recognising when they need help and seeking it in a timely manner;
 - (ii) maintaining (a joint responsibility with supervisors) regular contact with supervisors (both full-time and part-time PGRs are required to attend formal supervisory meetings **at least every 6-7 weeks** and more frequently if a Graduate School Board prescribes);

- (iii) preparing adequately for meetings with supervisors and Thesis Advisory Panels, and for progression reviews;
- (iv) setting and keeping to timetables and deadlines, including planning and submitting required work and generally maintaining satisfactory progress with the programme of research;
- (v) making supervisors aware of any specific needs or circumstances likely to affect their work;
- (vi) attending any development opportunities (research-related and other) that have been identified when agreeing their development needs with their supervisors;
- (vii) adhering to the University's regulations, policies and guidance regarding PGR programmes, including those relating to health and safety, and intellectual property;
- (viii) conducting research with integrity, in accordance with the University's policy framework (including the Code of practice and principles for good ethical governance, the Code of Practice on Research Integrity and the Research Data Management Policy) and any legal compliance and/or funder requirements;
- (ix) ensuring (a joint responsibility with supervisors) that appropriate ethical approval is obtained **before** research commences;
- (x) maintaining records of their professional development.

6.2 The responsibilities of the main supervisor of a PGR include:

- (i) introducing the PGR to the department, its facilities and procedures, and to other PGRs and staff;
- (ii) providing satisfactory advice and guidance on the conduct of the research and on the preparation of the thesis;
- (iii) monitoring the progress of the PGR's research programme, reporting on progress to the departmental Graduate School Board, and ensuring the PGR is aware of the need to submit the thesis by the specified deadline;
- (iv) encouraging the PGR to participate fully in the planning of their research and to take personal responsibility for the decisions made;
- (v) establishing and maintaining (a joint responsibility with the PGR) regular contact with the PGR, including during any periods in which the PGR is working on their research away from the University, and being accessible to the PGR to give advice;
- (vi) having input into the assessment of the PGR's development needs, and ensuring that instruction is provided in research methods and other academic skills relevant to the PGR's research;
- (vii) monitoring and supporting the PGR's professional development (see section 9);
- (viii) providing timely, constructive and effective feedback on the PGR's work and overall progress within the programme;
- (ix) ensuring that the PGR has a clear understanding of the need to exercise probity and to conduct research according to the University's policy framework (including the Code of practice and

principles for good ethical governance, Code of Practice on Research Integrity and the Research Data Management Policy) and any legal compliance and/or funder requirements, and of the implications of research misconduct;

- (x) ensuring that, in the case of PGRs undertaking laboratory work, there is an appropriate level of supervision and monitoring, including regular checks on data-recording and notebooks and occasional checks on the day-to-day conduct of experiments;
- (xi) ensuring (a joint responsibility with the PGR) that appropriate ethical approval is obtained **before** research commences;
- (xii) ensuring that the PGR is aware of relevant sources of advice within the University, including those relating to careers guidance;
- (xiii) ensuring that they meet their responsibilities to the PGR under the University's Health, Safety and Welfare Policy Statement and Arrangements;
- (xiv) providing effective pastoral support and, where appropriate, referring the PGR to other sources of such support within the University. Also, monitoring a PGR's Student Support Plan (if applicable);
- (xv) helping and encouraging the PGR to interact with others working in the field of research (for example, encouraging the PGR to attend relevant conferences and supporting him/her in seeking funding for such events), and to keep themselves informed of developments within their subject;
- (xvi) where appropriate, helping and encouraging the PGR to submit conference papers and articles to refereed journals;
- (xvii) maintaining the necessary supervisory expertise;
- (xviii) exercising sensitivity to the diverse needs of individual PGRs, including international PGRs and those with a disability.

6.3 Although supervisors may encourage their supervisees to seek advice on particular academic topics from other members of staff, the supervisor has the primary responsibility for directing the research to a satisfactory conclusion. It is, therefore, essential that the supervisor should approve the general content and planning of the research.

7. Periods of enrolment, changes to PGRs' status and personal circumstances (including illness), working hours and holidays, exceptional circumstances

Periods of enrolment and modes of attendance

7.1 The normal and maximum periods of study (i.e. from initial enrolment to the submission of the thesis) for full-time PhD, EngD, MPhil, MA/MSc (by research) programmes are as follows:

Full-time degrees

Degree	Normal period of enrolment	Minimum period of enrolment	Maximum period of study (including any continuation period)
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PhD (standard)	three years (36 months)	two years and nine months	four years
PhD (four-year version)	four years (48 months)	three years and five months	four years
PhD (3.5 years)	three years and six months (42 months)	three years	four years
Integrated PhD	four years (48 months)	three years and nine months	five years
EngD	four years (48 months)	three years and nine months	five years
MPhil	two years (24 months)	one year and nine months	three years
MA/MSc (by research)	one year (12 months)	nine months	one year and three months
[PhD (3.75) for ESRC WRDTP ONLY]	three years and nine months (45 months)	three years and two months	four years

These limits do not include any allowance for leave of absence/extension of submission, the criteria for which are outlined below.

Part-time degrees

Degree	Normal period of enrolment	Minimum period of enrolment	Maximum period of study (including any continuation period)
PhD (standard)	six years	five years and six months	seven years
PhD (four-year version)	eight years	seven years and five months	eight years
PhD (3.5 years)	seven years	six years	eight years
Integrated PhD	eight years	seven years and six months	nine years
EngD	Not currently available.	Not currently available.	Not currently available.
MPhil	four years	three years and six months	five years
MA/MSc (by research)	two years	one year and nine months	two years and three months
[PhD (3.75) for ESRC WRDTP ONLY]	seven years and six months	six years and nine months	eight years

These limits do not include any allowance for leave of absence/extension of submission, the criteria for which are outlined below.

- 7.2 All PGRs should plan their research, and should be actively encouraged to do so by their supervisors and departments, so that they will submit within the normal period of enrolment or their funded period whichever is the sooner (and subject to the minimum period of enrolment).
- 7.3 The final deadline for submission is at the end of the maximum period of study and is recorded in e:Vision. Failure to submit by the final submission deadline (last day of enrolment, or the next working day if a weekend or Bank Holiday) will result in failure of the degree.
- 7.4 The normal period of enrolment for part-time PGRs is pro rata to the period of full-time study. Part-time PGRs are 0.5 full-time-equivalent, unless there is an exceptional reason (e.g. mandated by the funder or reasonable adjustment for a disability) for an alternative intensity of study and this is approved by PGR Special Cases.
- 7.5 The maximum period between the PGR's initial enrolment and the submission of the thesis, including any leave of absence or extensions, is normally the maximum period of study plus four years (PhD/MPhil full-time and part-time) or two years (Masters by research full-time and part-time) (although in both cases this will normally be extended to accommodate parental leave).

Residence and attendance

- 7.6 PGRs are required to provide the University with accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- 7.7 PGRs are expected to engage with the academic requirements of their programme unless they are: (i) taking annual leave in accordance with this Policy, or (ii) are taking an approved break from their programme on medical or personal grounds in accordance with this Policy.
- 7.8 Full-time and part-time PGRs who are non Student Visa holders, on campus-based programmes and in their normal period of enrolment must reside in the UK and within reasonable commuting distance of the University of York, such that they can participate in the academic life of their department and benefit from the facilities and support on offer at York. They must meet their obligations under the University's [Attendance and Engagement Management Policy](#). They should attend York for all formal contact points (including formal supervisory meetings, TAP meetings, progression meetings). Temporary absence from York may be permitted for programme related reasons including data collection, placement, or mobility period for a collaborative programme, in accordance with the time-limits and approval requirements in this Policy, or where an individual exemption is approved by Special Cases. PGRs who are non Student Visa holders and on campus-based programmes may be based away from York for some or all of their continuation period.
- 7.9 PGRs who are Student Visa holders must reside in the UK and within reasonable commuting distance of the University of York, such that they can participate in the academic life of the department and benefit from the facilities and support on offer at York. They must meet their obligations under the University's [Attendance and Engagement Management Policy](#). They must attend York for all formal contact points (including ALL formal supervisory meetings, TAP meetings, progression meetings) throughout the duration of their sponsorship (ie including any continuation period and beyond) unless they have prior approval (from both their department and the Visa Compliance Team) for a temporary change of study location for research purposes or they are on a temporary placement that forms part of an approved placement route (where the placement is integral and assessed). If a Student Visa holder wishes to leave the UK prior to the end of their programme and does not plan to return they must follow the steps for [early departure](#).
- 7.10 Different residence and attendance requirements apply to PGRs on approved distance learning,

off-site or split-site programmes (see Appendix 5 and Appendix 6).

- 7.11 In a serious force majeure situation, a University-wide exemption to residence and/or attendance may be approved by YGRS as part of a wider University response.

National security legislation/export control and PGR mobility

- 7.12 PGRs whose research could fall under national security legislation/trusted research protocols (including dual use technologies) may require an export control licence if they wish to reside outside the UK (including in any continuation period) or undertake research-based trips outside the UK (including conferences). Early advice must be sought from PIP. PGRs and departments must be aware that the granting of an export licence cannot be guaranteed.

Early submission

- 7.13 A PGR who wishes to submit a thesis before the end of the minimum period of enrolment may only do so on the recommendation of the Graduate School Board concerned and with the permission of the Standing Committee on Assessment (SCA). In such circumstances the PGR will still be required to pay the full fees for the programme of study.

Continuation period (see also the section on those who exceed the normal period of enrolment)

- 7.14 MPhil, three-year PhD, Integrated PhD and EngD programmes have a normal period of full- or part-time enrolment and a maximum period of study, which is in all cases the normal period of enrolment plus 12 months. For 3.5 year PhD programmes, the maximum period of study is the normal period of enrolment plus 6 months. For MA/MSc (by research) programmes, the maximum period of study is the normal period of enrolment plus 3 months. This extended period of study is known as the continuation period. Four-year (or equivalent part-time) PhD programmes do not normally have a continuation period (an exceptional fifth year can be approved by PPPC as part of the programme in exceptional circumstances).
- 7.15 The continuation period provides a contingency against the research project not going according to plan. PGRs should not normally be undertaking any primary research (e.g. laboratory, archival or field work) during their continuation period and should, instead, be focused on the production of the thesis. Access to practical facilities for PGRs in a continuation period must be agreed by the relevant Graduate School Board on the basis of exceptional circumstances and for a specified and limited time only, and any such permission cannot be used as grounds for a request for an extension of the submission deadline.

Extensions of submission deadline (see also the section on those who exceed the normal period of enrolment)

- 7.16 An extension of submission deadline is required for a PGR who has not submitted their thesis within the maximum period of study (i.e. the normal period of enrolment plus any permitted continuation period). Extensions of submission deadline are granted only in exceptional circumstances, namely: where a PGR's work has been significantly adversely impaired by severe (serious and of sufficient duration), unforeseen, and unavoidable issues, normally of a medical or personal nature. The magnitude of the research task, or failure on the part of the PGR to perceive or act upon the magnitude of the research task, is not a sufficient reason for an extension, nor is the need, in itself, to take employment in any permitted continuation period.
- 7.17 Only PGR Special Cases can grant an extension to a submission deadline. An extension request will not normally be considered until the PGR is within three months of their submission deadline. An extension will normally be limited to six months, unless a compelling case is made for a longer period

of up to a maximum of one year. The total period of extension that may normally be approved is a maximum of two years (except in the case of MA/MSc (by research), where the total period of extension that may normally be approved is a maximum of one year).

PGRs who exceed the normal period of enrolment with permission

- 7.18 PGRs who have permission to exceed the normal period of enrolment, i.e. are in a continuation period, or have an approved extension of submission deadline, or who have been given the opportunity to revise and resubmit their thesis for examination, will pay a continuation fee (which is waived if the PGR submits within three months) to remain as candidates for the degree concerned, and to retain access to computing and library facilities. Continuation fees are payable by a PGR regardless of their source of funding and most sponsors/funding bodies will not cover the fees.
- 7.19 PGRs who have permission to exceed the normal period of enrolment should continue to receive supervisory and pastoral support from their department and supervisor(s) until they are ready to (re)submit their thesis for examination. The PGR can expect their supervisor(s) to read and comment on final draft(s) before (re)submission.
- 7.20 Formal supervisory meetings must continue as normal during a continuation period or extension to submission deadline for PGRs who are Student Visa holders (see the University's Attendance and Engagement Management Policy). For other PGRs, who are not Student Visa Holders, supervision meetings should continue on a regular basis at a frequency determined by the supervisor(s) in consultation with the Graduate Chair: these meetings should be recorded in SkillsForge.
- 7.21 PGRs who receive a revise and resubmit outcome should work with their supervisor(s), and where appropriate their Graduate Chairs, to agree an appropriate pattern of supervision. Student Visa holders must meet the supervision requirements set out in the University's Attendance and Engagement Management Policy.

Absence due to illness or personal reasons and leave of absence

- 7.22 PGRs can self-certify (via the FlexiLeave system) for short-periods of ill-health (up to seven days), but longer periods require medical evidence. International PGRs subject to UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) restrictions who will be absent from their programme due to medical or personal reasons for more than seven days should seek advice from the Immigration Advice Service and must follow either the procedure for authorised absence (for periods up to 60 days) or the procedure for Leave of Absence. Other PGRs who will be absent from their programme for more than seven days due to medical or personal reasons must contact their department for permission or, for an absence of one month or longer, follow the procedure for Leave of Absence. UKRI-funded PGRs may be eligible for paid sick leave.
- 7.23 A leave of absence allows a PGR to take an authorised break in their studies for a documented medical or personal reason. Leave of absence will normally be granted for a maximum of one year at a time and a maximum of two years in total (and is neither extended nor prorated for part-time PGRs). If a PGR wishes to take a leave of absence they must apply in advance for permission to do so; leave of absence that is entirely retrospective will not normally be considered or approved. A leave of absence will not normally be considered in a PGR's first month of enrolment or in the three months prior to a PGR's submission deadline.
- 7.24 Any PGR can apply for a leave of absence, however, approval for a leave of absence is not guaranteed. Leave of absence may be subject to the approval of the research council (or other sponsor/funding body) concerned. A PGR's visa may impose additional restrictions upon their ability to take leave of absence, which are beyond the control of the University.

- 7.25 During a leave of absence, PGRs are expected to take a complete break from their studies and should not work on their research or the period of leave of absence may be reduced or rescinded. PGRs on a leave of absence should not have formal supervisory meetings or TAP meetings and contact with their supervisor(s) should be for pastoral support only. PGRs on a leave of absence may access University services and undertake University training as long as this does not directly relate to their research (an exception may be made by the Graduate Chair for a PGR who is preparing to return to study at the end of their leave of absence).

Maternity, paternity and adoption leave

- 7.26 A PGR may request a leave of absence on the grounds of maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave. UKRI-funded PGRs or York-registered PGRs in receipt of a York-funded stipend, may be eligible for paid parental leave as set out in Appendix 4.

Emergency and compassionate leave

- 7.27 Where a PGR needs time off on a short term basis (normally up to a week, including 5 working days) to deal with an emergency situation (e.g. caring for a seriously ill dependent) or for compassionate leave in the case of a bereavement, they may request (see Appendix 4) emergency and compassionate leave, which in some limited cases may be funded .

Repeat study

- 7.28 PGRs (including those transferring in from other institutions) are not permitted to repeat any part of their degree programme.

Transfer of programme (internal to York)

- 7.29 A PGR may request a transfer from full-time to part-time or vice versa and/or to a different PGR programme where available and provided that the transfer takes place before the thesis is submitted and subject to the particular restrictions noted below (and in Appendix 5 for transfer to/from distance learning PGR programmes). PGRs should be aware that if they transfer programme, any funding they receive from a funding body or sponsor may be impacted and should check this before making a request. A coherent and realistic plan for the completion and submission of the thesis within the required period should be submitted as part of the approval process.

Transfer between departments

- 7.30 Where a PGR wishes to transfer to a PGR programme in a different department this should normally be agreed by both the sending and receiving departments. Transfers should take place as soon as possible, ideally before the first formal review of progress in the case of MPhil/PhD PGRs.

Transfer of programme level

- 7.31 Where a PGR wishes to transfer from an MA/MSc (by research) to an MPhil/PhD/EngD programme, or from an MPhil programme to a PhD/EngD programme, the department should ensure that this decision is considered in detail at a TAP meeting, prior to approval by the Graduate Chair and subsequent submission to PGRA. Transfers must always take place before the PGR has submitted a thesis for the programme on which they were initially enrolled. Transfers should normally take place in time to enable the PGR to undergo the first formal review of progress as a PGR on their 'new' programme (i.e. that to which they have transferred) to ensure that there is the same rigorous assessment of the PGR's ability to complete the degree, within the required timeframe, as PGRs who initially enrolled on the programme.

- 7.32 Where a PGR opts to transfer from an MPhil/PhD/EngD to a MA/MSc (by research):
- if they have not yet exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MA/MSc (by research), they will have the remaining normal period of enrolment for that degree plus the standard three-month continuation period to submit their thesis;
 - if they have already exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MA/MSc (by research), they will have a three-month MA/MSc (by research) continuation period added from the date of transfer to give them time to reframe their research and submit for the lower award.

Where a PGR opts to transfer from a PhD/EngD to an MPhil:

- if they have not yet exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MPhil, they will have the remaining normal period of enrolment for that degree plus the standard 12-month continuation period to submit their thesis;
- if they have already exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MPhil, they will have a 12-month MPhil continuation period added from the date of transfer to give them time to reframe their research and submit for the lower award.

Transfer of programme duration

- 7.33 A PGR who has enrolled on a three-year PhD programme may transfer to a four-year (or 3.5 year) PhD programme only exceptionally and with the express permission of PGR Special Cases, and on the understanding that the PGR will complete any additional requirements of the four-year (3.5 year) programme (including the payment of additional fees). A PGR who has enrolled on a four-year/3.5 year PhD programme may transfer to a three-year PhD programme only exceptionally and with the express permission of PGR Special Cases (and will remain liable for fees due for year three/four)

Requesting a leave of absence, extension of submission deadline, or transfer of programme

- 7.34 PGRs requesting a leave of absence, extension of submission deadline or transfer of programme should first approach their supervisor. Recommendations for leave of absence, extensions or transfers should be made, with independent supporting evidence where appropriate, by the departmental Graduate School Board concerned to [PGRA](#) for PGR Special Cases consideration. Leave of absence requests, particularly those of 24 months or over (in total, i.e. including the sum of multiple requests) may be referred to support to study.

Working hours, employment and voluntary work

- 7.35 Full-time PGR programmes are based on a notional 1800 working hours per year, which includes time spent on the research project, and time for personal and professional development (this equates to around 40 hours/working week). Actual working hours will vary for a number of reasons including the nature of the research and the timing within the programme but PGRs and supervisors should ensure that working hours are not excessive.
- 7.36 Subject to the approval of their supervisor(s), PGRs on full-time programmes (during designated periods of study i.e. excluding annual leave) may undertake a maximum of twenty hours per week of paid employment (this includes teaching and demonstrating and the associated preparation and marking; it also includes 'on-call' hours where a PGR is not actively engaged in work but where they have to be in a particular place) and/or voluntary work. This is a maximum figure and may be reduced by conditions imposed by a PGR's funding body/sponsor (for example, the UKRI recommends that its funded PGRs should work no more than 6 hours/week) AND/OR, where applicable, any new [UKVI restrictions](#). The twenty hours per week rule is advisory for full-time PGRs who have entered a continuation period AND are not subject to UKVI or funder restrictions. Supervisors and PGRs should ensure that the time spent on paid employment and/or voluntary work does not jeopardise the on-time submission of the thesis, or compromise well-being.

- 7.37 For certain categories of paid employment or voluntary work closely related to the programme of study, exceptions to the working hours maximum may be made by PPPC (at the programme level) or the Graduate School Board (for individual PGRs) on the recommendation of the Graduate School Board or supervisor respectively. Such exceptions may not be possible if PGRs are subject to UKVI restrictions.

Holidays/annual leave

- 7.38 Subject to any further conditions imposed by the research council (or other sponsor/funding body), the holiday (annual leave) allocation for full-time PGRs is the same as for full-time staff (i.e. normally 38 days including public holidays and University closure days) in any year (pro-rata for part-time PGRs).
- 7.39 Departments should encourage their PGRs to take their full allocation of annual leave in order to maintain an appropriate work-life balance and should monitor annual leave uptake to ensure that this is the case. Requests for annual leave should not be turned down without good reason. Departments may choose to implement a system of flexi-leave for PGRs if they feel that this would be beneficial.
- 7.40 The FlexiLeave system should be used by PGRs and their supervisor(s) for, respectively, requesting and approving annual leave. It is vital that annual leave records are correctly maintained for UKVI purposes.
- 7.41 Untaken leave may be treated as per staff leave in terms of carry-over of days unless funder terms dictate that this is not possible. PGRs who receive a stipend from or via the University of York should be aware that failure to utilise their annual leave entitlement does not, in any circumstances, result in the University owing backdated 'holiday pay' (as a stipend is not a salary and therefore untaken annual leave cannot be considered paid leave not received). PGRs should also be aware that annual leave does not, in any circumstances, extend their period of enrolment or change their submission date.

Transferring into or out of the University of York

- 7.42 In exceptional cases, a PGR may wish to transfer to or from the University of York. This is most likely to be the case when the PGR's main supervisor is transferring to or from York and the PGR wishes to move with them.

Transfer from York

- 7.43 If a PGR wishes to transfer from York to another university, this will be dependent on the decision of the other institution to accept the PGR. Permission may also have to be gained from the research council (or other sponsor/funding body). A copy of the data produced by the PGR must be deposited with the University before departure (see the University's [Research Data Management Policy](#)).

Transfer to York

- 7.44 If a PGR wishes to transfer from another university to York, they must apply through the usual postgraduate admissions process for PGRs. **Departments must adhere to the [Code of Practice on the Recruitment, Selection and Admission of Postgraduate Researchers](#), which provides further details of the constraints and practical considerations.**
- 7.45 Where a PGR transfers from another university to York, the normal, minimum, and maximum periods of enrolment (excluding any allowance for leave of absence or extensions) and the maximum period between initial enrolment and submission of the thesis (including any leave of absence or extensions) should be calculated from the date the PGR started their PGR programme at the other university, taking into account any adjustments to enrolment periods approved on admission to York.

- 7.46 If a PGR transfers to an MPhil or PhD at York following less than one year's enrolment (or part-time equivalent) on that degree at their previous institution they must undertake York's first formal review of progress no later than 12 months after their enrolment on the programme (i.e. calculating from their MPhil or PhD start date at their previous institution). If a PGR transfers to a PhD at York following less than two years' enrolment (or part-time equivalent) on that degree at their previous institution they must undertake York's second formal review of progress no later than 24 months after their enrolment on the programme (calculated as above). This is to ensure that any issues with PGR progress are picked up in good time. Departments may make a case for an extension to the progression deadline in accordance with stated policy.

Entry with advanced standing on the basis of prior experiential learning in research

- 7.47 Exceptionally, permission may be granted, on the recommendation of the relevant Graduate Chair, for a shortened minimum PhD enrolment period for an individual (two years full-time; four years part-time) on the basis of their prior experiential learning in research (for example, for an experienced industrial researcher). This decision may be made: (i) pre-enrolment with approval by the Dean of YGRS or (ii) post-enrolment, but before the first formal review of progress, with approval by PGR Special Cases. If advanced standing is approved, the PGR will receive written notification. A department's recommendation for a shortened minimum PhD enrolment period must explain how an individual's prior experiential learning in research provides them with the skills (academic as well as practical) to complete a PhD in a shorter duration. A department's procedure for assessing prior experiential learning in research must be approved by PPPC and should be a robust, fully-documented process, which may be linked, where appropriate, to professional status (e.g. chartership). If a PGR is granted approval for a shortened minimum PhD enrolment period under this scheme, they must meet the criteria for a second formal review of progress no later than 12 months (or part-time equivalent) after commencing their programme. If they do not meet the criteria for the second formal review of progress at the first attempt, they may then be assessed against the criteria for the first formal review of progress and, if successful (at the first or second attempt), continue on their PhD programme but revert to the standard minimum PhD enrolment period. PGRs with approval for a shortened minimum enrolment period are still required to pay the full fees for the programme of study. For the avoidance of doubt, prior completion of an MRes, MA/MSc (by research) or MPhil (or similar qualification) does not entail any entitlement to a reduced period of enrolment for an MPhil or PhD (as applicable) at York.

Support to study

- 7.48 Where there are substantial concerns about a PGR's welfare and/or their impact on the safety or welfare of others, the University's [Support to Study procedure](#) may be used.

Exceptional circumstances

- 7.49 Exceptional circumstances relating to any formal assessment in a PGR programme, including, but not limited to, formal reviews of progress, the thesis and the oral examination are dealt with by SCA and/or PGR Special Cases in line with this Policy (see in particular section 12 on assessment which covers non-submission of the thesis, continued postponement of the oral examination, and non-attendance at the oral examination; Appendix 2 which covers progression).
- 7.50 Exceptional circumstances relating to credit-bearing taught modules are covered by the Exceptional Circumstances Affecting Assessment Policy and are dealt with by Special Cases (not PGR Special Cases).
- 7.51 Other exceptional circumstances relating to PGR programmes are dealt with PGR Special Cases (see in particular this section on Leave of Absence and extensions to submission deadlines, also Appendix 10).

- 7.52 If a PGR dies or is rendered permanently unable to complete their studies, normally due to serious medical circumstances, the University may be able to grant a posthumous or aegrotat award.

Assumed withdrawal

- 7.53 If a PGR fails to engage with, or disengages from, their programme, and sustained attempts by the University to make contact have failed and/or the PGR does not comply with requests to indicate their intention, the University may exercise its right to terminate the PGR's registration on the basis of an 'assumed withdrawal'. Full details for the procedure to be followed (including by departments where they wish to initiate this process) are set out in the University's guidance on Students who are assumed to have left.

International PGRs

- 7.54 For PGRs subject to UKVI regulations, all time limits and changes to status etc. are subject to current Home Office visa regulations. PGRs who are Student Visa holders must be monitored by departments in accordance with the University's Attendance and Engagement Management Policy; this includes the monitoring of formal supervisory meetings and Thesis Advisory Panel meetings. Additional points of contact are required for PGRs who exceed the normal period of enrolment. A PGR who is Student Visa holder and who needs to remain in the UK after the expiry of their visa, for example to complete corrections or in the light of a revise and resubmit outcome, will need to apply for a new Student Visa before their existing visa expires.

8. Progress and review arrangements

- 8.1 Regular review of a PGR's progress is essential to maximise the likelihood of the PGR completing the programme successfully within an appropriate timescale, and to ensure that if progress is unsatisfactory that they are given the support they need to make improvements. Formal supervisory meetings and routine meetings of Thesis Advisory Panels (TAPs) (see below) form a key part of this regular review process. MPhil and PhD/EngD PGRs are also subject to formal reviews of progress (see below). Additional progression points may be introduced when proposed by a department and approved by PPPC.
- 8.2 Where a PGR has to make any significant changes to their research project for any reason (including but not limited to force majeure events), this should be discussed at formal supervisory meetings and TAP meetings and taken into account during formal reviews of progress. The discussion and any actions should be recorded in SkillsForge for future reference.
- 8.3 Departments are encouraged to specify milestones for PGRs to monitor their progress against (which may or may not be assessed as part of formal reviews of progress). This could include expectations regarding skills training (e.g. the completion of certain courses/modules by a particular point), and expectations regarding the dissemination of information (for example, in some disciplines, a typical PhD PGR might present a poster at an internal conference in year 1, present an internal seminar on their work in year 2, and present their work at an external conference and be in the process of submitting a paper for publication by the time of thesis submission). Departments may need to consider making reasonable adjustments to milestones for PGRs with a disability and can seek advice, as required, from Disability Services.

Thesis Advisory Panels

- 8.4 Each PGR will have a Thesis Advisory Panel (TAP). The principal purposes of the panel are to review the progress of the PGR's research programme and Professional Development Plan (PDP), and to supplement, where appropriate, the advice and guidance given to the PGR by the supervisor(s).

- 8.5 The TAP consists of the supervisor(s) (the supervisory team) and at least one additional member of the University's Academic, Research or Teaching staff. The TAP should be chaired by a non-supervisory member of the University's Academic, Research or Teaching staff who is at grade 7 or above or has considerable experience of supervising PGRs. The following are eligible to serve as additional TAP members: research fellows (NB some research fellows may qualify to serve as a TAP chair), emeritus and honorary staff at the University of York; academic staff based in other academic institutions; researchers based in industry or professional practice. The panel will be appointed within the first three months of the PGR's enrolment period, and the PGR will be informed of its membership. Not all TAP members need to be present at each TAP however the minimum attendance is two people, including one who is not a supervisor and is eligible to chair the meeting.
- 8.6 Departments should carefully consider the composition of each TAP (in terms of the number of people, their expertise and their experience) to ensure that it can properly fulfil its purpose. This means ensuring that there is at least one non-supervisory member who is sufficiently independent of the supervisory team (i.e. excluding anyone with a close personal relationship to a supervisor) to fulfil their role with respect to the Review of Supervision and any role of the TAP in respect to formal reviews of progress (see below).

TAP meetings

- 8.7 For full-time PGRs, the TAP will meet with the PGR at least once within every six-month period (i.e. in months 1-6, 7-12, etc., for a full-time PGR). For part-time PGRs, the TAP will meet with the PGR at least once a year. Any member of the panel, or the PGR, may request a panel meeting at other times. Meetings of the TAP are additional to formal supervisory meetings but may be integrated with progress review meetings (see below). The TAP is expected to meet only during the PGR's normal enrolment period. The purpose and target dates of the TAP meetings to be held during the PGR programme should be made clear to the PGR by the supervisor at the outset of the programme and both the PGR and the main supervisor should take responsibility for scheduling TAP meetings.
- 8.8 In preparing for a TAP meeting, a PGR should complete the TAP preparation form via SkillsForge and provide relevant supporting documentation in order to reflect on and summarise progress on their work during the review period and outline their future objectives. The supervisor should provide a comprehensive, honest, and constructive written report on the PGR's progress on the TAP Meeting form.
- 8.9 During or immediately following the TAP meeting, a brief report on the outcome and future actions, agreed by all the panel members, should be produced on the TAP meeting record form via SkillsForge where it will be accessible to the PGR (in order to ensure feedback on their progress and to inform the next steps in their research) and TAP members. The Graduate Chair should monitor TAP forms to ensure process and quality are appropriate. The department is ultimately responsible for ensuring that TAP meetings happen on time and are correctly recorded in SkillsForge.

Post-TAP supervision discussion and Review of Supervision discussion and form

- 8.10 Towards the end of each TAP meeting, the supervisor(s) should leave the meeting but the PGR should remain with one or more non-supervisory TAP member(s) (sometimes referred to as the Independent Panel Member(s) and who should be clearly independent of the supervisory team). The non-supervisory TAP member(s) should encourage the PGR to complete and submit the Review of Supervision form, thereby offering the PGR an opportunity to discuss their supervisory relationship in a safe environment. The Review of Supervision form can also be completed independently of the TAP process. See section 5 on Supervision for more details.

Raising an issue about a TAP

- 8.11 If a PGR is unhappy with the TAP that they have been allocated, or if they believe it is not operating as it should, they should attempt to resolve the matter informally in the first instance. If they feel unable to discuss the matter directly with their TAP, or the problem remains unresolved having done this, the PGR should follow the steps outlined in section 5: *Providing feedback on, and dealing with challenges to, the supervisory relationship*.

Formal reviews of progress for MPhil, PhD and EngD PGRs

*NOTE: PGRs registered on PhD and EngD programmes before 1st September 2016 are subject to the **Confirmation of Enrolment** process.*

Purpose and overview of formal reviews of progress

- 8.12 A PGR is admitted to a PhD/EngD or MPhil programme on the basis of an assessment of their potential at the admissions stage. Remaining on the PhD/EngD or MPhil programme is conditional on the PGR making satisfactory progress with respect to their research project and the other elements of their PhD/EngD or MPhil programme.
- 8.13 The purpose of formal reviews of progress is, therefore, to ensure that PGRs on PhD/EngD and MPhil programmes are making satisfactory progress. Formal reviews of progress take place on an annual basis for full-time PhD/EngD and MPhil PGRs (towards the end of a PGR's academic year) and on a biennial basis for part-time PhD and MPhil PGRs. Formal reviews of progress are not required for entry into a continuation period, where this is permitted.
- 8.14 In a formal review of progress, a PhD, EngD or MPhil PGR is assessed against the relevant University progression criteria by a progression panel. PGRs are permitted a maximum of two opportunities to meet the relevant University progression criteria at each formal review of progress. If a PGR has not met the relevant University progression criteria after two attempts they will be deemed to have **failed** the progression point and they will be transferred to an alternative programme or their enrolment will be terminated. Progression decisions are approved by the SCA on behalf of Senate.
- 8.15 Full details on formal reviews of progress are provided in Appendix 2. Whilst the framework for formal reviews of progress is set out by the University, many of the details (including the exact timing, the evidence requested, and the composition and operation of panels) are determined departmentally within the parameters set by the University. A department must obtain PPPC approval for its approach to formal reviews of progress (i.e. including in relation to the timing, evidence and panels) and any major changes to that approach.

Composition of the progression panel

- 8.16 The progression panel for a PhD/EngD or MPhil PGR should comprise at least two individuals and be independent of the PGR's supervisor(s). The progression panel should be chaired by a senior academic member of the same or cognate department who has experience of successful PGR supervision in the broad disciplinary area within which the PGR is based.
- 8.17 Progression panels are not expected to make detailed judgements about a PGR's research project, nor to direct the PGR's future work; rather, they are required to determine, on the basis of the evidence from the PGR and the supervisor's report, if the PGR meets the relevant University criteria for progression (which are threshold requirements).

Timing of formal reviews of progress

- 8.18 Formal reviews of progress will take place according to the schedule below. PGRs must complete all

aspects of the review, and the recommendation of the progression panel must be submitted via SkillsForge, by the deadline.

- 8.19 **Maximum period of enrolment prior to progression reviews** (departments must set their own timelines within these broad University parameters – see Appendix 2):

Which progression point?	FT PGR First Attempt Timing	FT PGR Second Attempt Timing	PT PGR First Attempt Timing	PT PGR Second Attempt Timing
PhD/EngD & MPhil First Formal Review of Progress	9-12 Months	No more than 3 months after the date of the first progress review meeting	17-24 Months	No more than 6 months after the date of the first progress review meeting
PhD/EngD Second Formal Review of Progress	21-24 Months	No more than 3 months after the date of the first progress review meeting	41-48 Months	No more than 6 months after the date of the first progress review meeting
4 Year PhD/EngD Third Formal Review of Progress	33-36 Months	No more than 3 months after the date of the first progress review meeting	65-72 Months	No more than 6 months first attempt the date of the first progress review meeting

Evidence considered by the progression panel

- 8.20 Departments determine (subject to PPC approval) what evidence (written and often oral) PhD/EngD and MPhil PGRs should provide to demonstrate that they have met the relevant University progression criteria (see Appendix 2). Evidence from the PGR is considered alongside the supervisor's report on the PGR's progress and, where required by a department, agreed TAP reports.

Progression criteria

- 8.21 The University's progression criteria for PhD/EngD and MPhil programmes set out the *threshold* requirements for progression to the next stage. They should be understood by reference to what a conscientious PGR might reasonably expect to have achieved in the time available. Details of the University's progression criteria are provided in Appendix 2.

Progress review meetings

- 8.22 The progression panel will consider the evidence from the PGR alongside the supervisor's report, and, where required by a department, agreed TAP reports at a progress review meeting. Based on these elements the progression panel will make a decision as to whether the PGR has met, exceeded or not met the relevant University progression criteria, and make a recommendation regarding PGR progression.
- 8.23 If a department's evidence requirements include oral evidence obtained at the progress review meeting, then a PGR will, as a matter of course, be present at their progress review meeting.

- 8.24 If a department's evidence requirements do not include oral evidence obtained at the progress review meeting, then a PGR will not, as a matter of course, be present at their progress review meeting. **If, however, a progression panel does not feel able, on the basis of the evidence provided by a PGR and/or the supervisor's report and/or the agreed TAP reports (if applicable), to recommend that an individual PGR be progressed, then a meeting at which the PGR in question is present, along with at least two members of the progression panel, must be scheduled as soon as possible (and within the department's specified window for progress review meetings) to give the PGR every opportunity to demonstrate that they have met the relevant University progression criteria.**

Second attempt at meeting the criteria

- 8.25 If, at a PGR's first attempt, a progression panel decides that a PGR has *not yet* met the relevant University progression criteria (including on the grounds of non-submission of evidence and/or non-attendance at a progress review meeting), it must recommend a second attempt at meeting the relevant University progression criteria, programme transfer or withdrawal.
- 8.26 The progression panel will provide the PGR with clear written feedback about why the progression criteria were not met and its reasons for recommending a second attempt, programme transfer or withdrawal. The progression panel will specify, in broad terms, what the PGR would need to do to meet the relevant University progression criteria at the second attempt.
- 8.27 In the case of a recommendation for programme transfer or withdrawal, the PGR may choose to accept the recommendation or, alternatively, decide to make a second attempt at meeting the relevant University progression criteria against the advice of the progression panel. The PGR must inform their department of their intention (i.e. second attempt, transfer or withdrawal) within two weeks of being informed of the panel's recommendation (if a PGR does not respond within this timeframe it will be treated as an assumed withdrawal). See Appendix 2 **for full details of making a second attempt at meeting the progression criteria, including the requirement for recording the second progress review meeting.**
- 8.28 If the progression panel decides that the PGR has met or exceeded the relevant University progression criteria at the second attempt, it should recommend that the PGR be progressed. If, however, the progression panel decides that the PGR has *not* met the relevant University progression criteria at the second attempt (including on the grounds of the non-submission of evidence and/or non-attendance at a progress review meeting), the PGR will be deemed to have failed the progression point and the progression panel must recommend that the PGR be transferred to an MPhil programme (for PGRs enrolled on a PhD programme only); *or* that the PGR be transferred to a MA/MSc (by research) programme; *or* that the PGR's enrolment with the University be terminated. The progression panel should provide reasons for its recommendation.
- 8.29 If a PGR progresses at the second attempt this does not alter the timing of the next formal review of progress (if applicable), nor change the period of enrolment, nor alter the deadline for submission of the thesis.
- 8.30 Transfer to an alternative programme is subject to the approval of any extensions, if required, and the PGR will be bound by the regulations and requirements of their new programme.
- 8.31 A PGR retains the right of appeal against a failure to progress, as outlined in the Regulation 2.8.

Extensions to progression deadlines

- 8.32 An extension request will not be considered until the PGR is within two months of their progression deadline. Any extension will normally be limited to two months. The total period of extension that

may normally be approved is a maximum of four months.

- 8.33 Any extension to the deadline for a formal review of progress does not alter the timing of the next formal review of progress (if applicable), nor change the period of enrolment, nor alter the deadline for submission of the thesis.

9. Development of research and other skills

- 9.1 In line with The Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers and UK Research and Innovation's Statement of Expectations for Doctoral Training, PGRs are strongly encouraged to take advantage of the training made available to them to support their research, to enhance their employability and to assist their career progress after completion of their degree.
- 9.2 Much of the training that PGRs receive is informal (e.g. instruction on techniques or the use of equipment and other resources) and comes from their supervisor(s), TAP, or wider research group. Formal training is provided by departments, and by BRIC. BRIC offers a comprehensive suite of personal and professional skills training. Training is also provided by external partners, for example within collaborative Doctoral Training Centres and nationally (for example vitae.ac.uk).
- 9.3 PGRs are responsible for keeping an accurate and comprehensive record of the training (whether provided centrally, departmental or externally) and other enrichment activities that they have undertaken (e.g. presentations made, conferences attended, teaching, demonstrating, or internships undertaken, etc.). The SkillsForge system provides a means for recording training and other activities alongside records of professional development engagement.

Funder-training requirements

- 9.4 Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that PGRs are aware of any training or development requirements imposed by a research council (or other sponsor/funding body) and for ensuring that opportunities are available to satisfy any such requirements. PGRs are responsible for ensuring that these requirements are met.

University-training requirements

- 9.5 All new PGRs are required to complete the online tutorial on Research Integrity (see section 11). PGRs are expected to complete the 'Being an Effective Researcher' (BERT) and 'Information Security Awareness' online tutorials within six months of the start of their programme. Departments are responsible for ensuring that their PGRs have completed these tutorials. PGRs are encouraged to undertake training in the production of accessible documents so that they can ensure their e-theses are accessible. PGRs are required to undertake Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) training prior to teaching or demonstrating (see below). PGRs may also be required by their departmental Graduate School Board to undertake subject-specific training (see below).

Professional development planning

- 9.6 PGRs are entitled and expected to spend a minimum of 10 days (pro rata for part-time PGRs) per year (can be averaged across years) engaged in activities and training to support their professional and career development. Supervisors must respect this time and discuss and review the activities undertaken during formal supervisory meetings.
- 9.7 PGRs are expected to complete, in consultation with their supervisor and with guidance from BRIC, a Professional Development Plan (PDP). A PDP is a record of the skills developed throughout a PGR's programme and its purpose is to prompt reflection on, and discussion about, the PGR's personal,

professional and career development. The PDP process is as follows:

(a) initial analysis - by six months for full-time PhD/EngD/MPhil PGRs and by three months for full-time MA/MSc (by research) PGRs). PGRs should use the relevant BRIC resources to: (i) take stock of their existing skills, strengths and opportunities, (ii) consider future professional development opportunities, (iii) identify appropriate professional development goals and record them in a PDP. PGRs should share their initial PDP with their supervisor(s) for comment;

(b) review and updating - PGRs should review and update their PDP on a regular basis. PDPs should be considered during regular supervisory meetings and at TAP meetings (with this discussion recorded as part of the TAP form). PDPs should also be considered during the progression process (MPhil, PhD and EngD PGRs only).

- 9.8 PGRs are encouraged to take advantage of the careers advice and guidance available to them. PGRs can use their York email address to access the extensive Vitae Careers Resources.

Departmental training requirements, including taught modules

- 9.9 The Graduate School Board is responsible for deciding whether PGRs on a particular PGR programme should be subject to any formal training requirements (for example auditing or passing particular courses or credit-bearing modules, and/or completing a certain number of hours/days of training per annum), taking into the account, where applicable, the expectations of the relevant research council (or other sponsor/funding body). The introduction of, or significant changes to, formal training requirements should be considered a major modification to a programme and submitted to PPPC for approval (normally by Chair's action).
- 9.10 The Graduate School Board should ensure that formal departmental training requirements are: (i) necessary (directly relevant to the PGR programme), (ii) reasonable (achievable within the time-frame available without negative impact on a PGR's research, see below), and (iii) equitable (for example, within the department or inter-institutional Doctoral Training Centre or equivalent).
- 9.11 PPPC would not normally expect a three-year or four-year PhD programme (not including iPhDs or other programmes with an enhanced training component where this has been explicitly approved by PPPC e.g. a DTP/CDT programme) to include significantly more than a total of 600 hours of additional activities (i.e. activities not primarily directed towards research or thesis preparation) in order to ensure that PGRs have sufficient time to spend on their research and thesis preparation to submit within the four-year deadline (or part-time equivalent). For credit-bearing modules, departments are reminded that 10 credits is equivalent to a notional 100 hours of PGR work.
- 9.12 Departmental training requirements must be explained to the PGRs at departmental induction and specified in the department's PGR handbook. PGRs must be told how they may obtain an exemption from departmental training requirements (including those relating to credit-bearing modules) through the recognition of prior learning (e.g. if a PhD PGR has already completed a relevant MRes programme they might be eligible to gain an exemption from certain compulsory methodology courses/modules). Where PGRs are required to pass, for progression or for award, non-credit-bearing courses and/or credit-bearing modules, it must be clear what reassessment opportunities, if any, are available.

Taught modules

- 9.13 PGRs may be required to take credit-bearing modules - normally at Masters or Doctoral level - within a PGR programme. Masters level modules may be taken from a taught postgraduate programme. Any credit-bearing modules created specifically for a PGR programme and not part of an existing taught programme require departmental approval and may require PPPC approval. All credit-bearing modules must be on the module catalogue.

- 9.14 Where PGRs are required to undertake a credit-bearing module they should be registered for the module in the University student records system and will be eligible for an academic transcript. The level of attainment required should be that normally expected of the module (i.e. for Masters level modules the pass mark should be 50%). Where a module is shared with other students, the assessment tasks should be the same for all. It should be clear whether credit-bearing modules can be compensated or re-assessed and these rules must be approved by PPPC and specified in the department's PGR handbook.
- 9.15 All credit-bearing modules must be overseen by a taught external examiner in line with the University's standard procedures. Where PGRs undertake credit-bearing modules that form part of a taught programme, the external examiner for that programme should be asked to take responsibility for overseeing the marks awarded to PGRs registered on that module. Where PGRs undertake credit-bearing modules that do not form part of a taught programme, the department must request the appointment of a new taught external examiner for the module(s) in question (or the addition of responsibilities to an existing external examiner for a related taught programme if applicable) from the SCA.
- 9.16 When PGRs are taking credit-bearing taught modules they are subject to the Exceptional Circumstances Affecting Assessment Policy. The department must record on SkillsForge (general meeting form) the outcome of any use of the EC Policy in relation to a PGR, and should also inform the PGR Special Cases officers.

Failure to meet departmental training requirements

- 9.17 Failure to meet departmental training requirements (including those relating to credit-bearing modules) can be used to inform progression decisions (for example, if as a consequence of failure to meet departmental training requirements, a PGR does not meet the relevant University progression criteria). Failure to meet departmental training requirements should not, on its own, be grounds for a PGR to be discontinued from their programme or to fail a formal progression point unless this option is explicitly approved for a particular PGR programme by PPPC.

Role of PGRs in teaching and demonstrating

- 9.18 Departments are encouraged to offer PGRs opportunities to engage in teaching (including demonstrating), where available. Departments must ensure that their practice with regard to GTAs is compliant with the University Policy Graduate Teaching Assistants, which is reviewed and updated annually by UTC, and which includes the circumstances in which PGRs can become GTAs, training and support for GTAs, selection of GTAs, and quality assurance and enhancement for GTAs.
- 9.19 Departments are responsible for ensuring that GTAs meet the minimum requirements outlined in the University Policy on Graduate Teaching Assistants before undertaking any teaching or demonstrating, namely having participated in the Introduction to Learning and Teaching course *and* having undergone appropriate departmental training. GTAs and those who are intending to pursue an academic career are encouraged to take advantage of the central training on offer, including the accredited YPAD route.

10. Evaluation of PGR programmes

- 10.1 Departments must have in place appropriate mechanisms for: (i) PGRs and recent graduates, and their supervisors to evaluate their experience, (ii) monitoring TAP and progression reports, and (iii) reviewing examiners' reports. Departments may wish to consider whether feedback might usefully be requested from other interested parties e.g. sponsors, PGR administrators, alumni, employers and collaborating organisations.

- 10.2 Departments also receive feedback from PGR representatives. Each department must ensure that there is at least one PGR on its Graduate School Board (or equivalent).
- 10.3 Graduate School Boards should consider relevant PGR data (including PRES data, submission and completion data etc.) and ensure that any issues raised are dealt with appropriately.
- 10.4 When undertaking reviews of its provision, a department should ensure that PGRs and their programmes are fully covered and, where relevant, issues are flagged for consideration by PPPC.
- 10.5 YGRS will ensure that the institution's academic review processes pay due attention to PGRs and their programmes. The students' union represents PGRs on relevant University committees.

11. Responsible research and academic integrity

- 11.1 For the avoidance of doubt, PGRs are subject to Regulation 7 with regard to disciplinary offences, other than offences of academic misconduct. Allegations of PGR academic misconduct are dealt with as set out below in the Section on Academic Misconduct and in Appendix 3 (this includes referral to Regulation 7 in certain circumstances).
- 11.2 The University expects the highest standards of integrity from its PGRs and regards any form of research or academic misconduct as an extremely serious matter. For the avoidance of doubt, inappropriate use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) may constitute academic or research misconduct in accordance with the latest University guidance on generative AI use in PGR programmes.

Research integrity

- 11.3 In line with the UUK Concordat to support research integrity, PGRs and their supervisors are expected to maintain the highest standards of research conduct and to familiarise themselves and act in accordance with the University's policy framework: the Code of practice and principles for good ethical governance, the Code of Practice on Research Integrity and the Research Data Management Policy.

Ethical approval

- 11.4 Any ethical issues relating to a PGR's research (including any issues relating to the University's duty of care to the PGR) must be identified at the earliest opportunity (ideally before admission) by the supervisor and the PGR, with reference to the University's Code of practice and principles for good ethical governance, and seeking advice where necessary from the relevant ethics committee.
- 11.5 Where formal ethical approval from an internal ethics committee and, where necessary, an external body is needed, the supervisor and the PGR will be jointly responsible for securing this in accordance with the Code of practice and principles for good ethical governance **before** the research commences. Confirmation of ethical approval (where needed) is required for formal reviews of progress and at the point of thesis submission.
- 11.6 Ethical approval **cannot be given retrospectively**, and any data obtained prior to ethical approval cannot be used. Failing to gain ethical approval when required can lead to investigation for research misconduct.

Academic integrity

- 11.7 PGRs must not, by implication or otherwise represent the work of others as their own, represent work done in collaboration with others as their own unaided work, or present work for assessment which suggests that factual information has been collected which has not in fact been collected, or which falsifies factual information. PGRs should pay attention to ensuring that they avoid plagiarism resulting from poor academic practice. All sources, whether published books or articles or unpublished material of any kind, must be explicitly acknowledged, and quotations or close paraphrases correctly attributed.
- 11.8 Departments are strongly encouraged to make use of text-matching software (such as Turnitin) on early-stage PGR work (for example PGR TAP and progression reports) to enable any issues with poor academic practice to be identified and addressed at this point.
- 11.9 PGRs are bound by the [Policy on Transparency of Authorship in PGR Programmes, including generative AI, proofreading and translation](#)

Use of generative AI

- 11.10 PGRs must adhere to the current [University guidance on the use of generative AI in PGR programmes](#).

Allegations of academic and research misconduct

- 11.11 **Allegations of misconduct by a PGR in any formal assessment** (including but not limited to reviews of progress, the thesis and the oral examination) other than in credit-bearing taught modules will be dealt with according to the Assessment Misconduct Policy for PGRs (Appendix 3). No decision about the PGR's progression or the outcome of the examination may be made until the investigation has been concluded.
- 11.12 **Allegations of misconduct by a PGR in credit-bearing taught modules** that form part of their PGR programme will be dealt with according to the Academic Misconduct Policy for taught students, with a report being made to the Progression Panel (where applicable). Note that disciplinary academic misconduct offences in a taught component are dealt with under Regulation 7: Student Discipline via the Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Procedure
- 11.13 **Allegations of research misconduct by a PGR** (including, but not limited to, ethics approvals, data management and dissemination), even if identified in a formal assessment and whether or not the research is published or otherwise disseminated, will be dealt with according to the [Policy for the Investigation of an Allegation of Research Misconduct](#). Where there is doubt as to whether the Assessment Misconduct Policy for PGRs or the Policy for the Investigation of an Allegation of Research Misconduct should apply, the latter policy takes precedence. Serious research misconduct can result in the termination of the PGR's enrolment at the University. Where a member of staff is also a PGR and their employment is research related, the staffing elements of the Research Misconduct policy take precedence. Where research misconduct is alleged during the assessment process but is investigated under the Policy for the Investigation of Allegation of Research Misconduct, then no decision about the PGR's progression or the outcome of the examination may be made until the investigation has been concluded.
- 11.14 **Allegations of academic misconduct in elements of a PGR's programme that are mandated or expected but not formally assessed** (e.g. TAP submissions, internal presentations etc.) may be investigated and dealt with as probationary offences according to the Assessment Misconduct Policy for PGRs (Appendix 3).
- 11.15 **Allegations of misconduct regarding a PGR aiding or abetting a student at the University of York or elsewhere** to commit academic misconduct are dealt with under Regulation 7: Student Discipline via the Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Procedure.

Training for integrity and ethics

- 11.16 The University (via BRIC) and departments will provide PGRs with guidance on good research practice, with reference to the University's policy framework, and the avoidance of research and academic misconduct.
- 11.17 PGRs are required to complete successfully the University Online Research Integrity Tutorial (this includes both academic and research misconduct) before their first TAP meeting. Confirmation of successful completion is required for MA/MSc (by research) PGRs when the thesis is submitted for examination, and by MPhil, PhD and EngD PGRs at the first formal review of progress (or, for pre-August 2016 entry MPhil and PhD PGRs at thesis submission/confirmation of enrolment respectively). PGRs who have not completed the task will not be examined/considered for progression.

Data management planning

- 11.18 All PGRs are expected to work with their supervisor(s) to put in place a data management plan (for PhD and MPhil PGRs this should be by the first formal review of progress). The data management plan should be updated as required and, where applicable, checked at subsequent progression points. The data management plan should include consideration of how research data is to be treated once the PGR has completed their programme (e.g. secure disposal or archiving and sharing via an appropriate data repository).

12. Assessment

- 12.1 Assessment rules for PGR programmes are overseen by the SCA and exceptions to these rules must be approved by the SCA. Exceptions to these rules (e.g. in relation to the number of internal and/or external examiners, the timing of the examination, and/or the addition of a public defense) are often required for double and joint PhDs with international partners (see section 15).

Nature of the thesis

- 12.2 Assessment for a PGR award will be on the basis of a thesis and/or approved alternative assessment format (see below) and an oral examination (viva voce) if required (see below). Material submitted for examination or re-examination remains the property of the University.
- 12.3 For the avoidance of doubt, references in the PoRD to the thesis will also include any approved alternative assessment format.

Types of thesis

- 12.4 **Monograph thesis.** A monograph thesis is a unified, single author document comprising a number of chapters with an introduction and conclusion. The relevant Graduate School Board should determine - and specify in its PGR handbook - the length (word count/page count) of a monograph thesis for each of its PGR programmes (including associated transfer and exit awards), taking into account the type and length of the programme and disciplinary norms.
- 12.5 **Journal-style thesis.** A journal-style thesis presents research of an equivalent quality and volume as a monograph thesis but incorporates one or more chapters that are in a format suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed title alongside a supporting commentary. The relevant Graduate School Board should determine - and specify in its PGR handbook - if a journal-style thesis is permitted for a PGR programme (including associated transfer and exit awards) and any additional stipulations that apply

(additional stipulations require PPPC approval), taking into account the type and length of the programme and disciplinary norms.

Alternative assessment formats for practice-based PGR programmes

12.6 For a practice-based PGR programme (and associated transfer and exit awards), an alternative assessment format, for example a portfolio of practice-based work (which may include creative products such as musical compositions, performances, films, literary works) may be appropriate instead of, or in addition, to a thesis. If the alternative assessment format replaces a thesis, there must be a written element. The thesis or written element should put the practice into its research context (fit with the wider field of study, research methodology and process, originality and relevance). A department wishing to introduce or modify an alternative assessment format must seek approval from PPPC for what is being proposed - which should take into account the type and length of programme and disciplinary norms - and include the details in its PGR handbook.

Requirements for all assessment formats

- 12.7 Work submitted by a PGR candidate for assessment must:
- i. meet the criteria for the degree on which they are enrolled, including in terms of original contribution to the field (PhD and MPhil);
 - ii. form a coherent body of interrelated work;
 - iii. meet the University's standards with respect to academic and research integrity;
 - iv. be chiefly their own, and where work has been undertaken in collaboration with others this is explicitly acknowledged in the submission in accordance with University guidance;
 - v. with respect to the main text, be written in English (unless permission for an exception is granted, pre-submission, by SCA on the request of the relevant departmental Graduate School Board);
 - vi. be derived from research undertaken whilst enrolled on their PGR programme (unless permission for an exception is granted, pre-submission, by SCA on the request of the relevant departmental Graduate School Board and this fact is explicitly acknowledged in the submission. All research must have had appropriate ethical sign-off);
 - vii. not have been previously submitted for any degree or other qualification at the University or elsewhere (unless a resubmission for a lower award, OR where the previously submitted work is explicitly identified in a declaration signed by the candidate (which also identifies their contribution to the previously submitted work) as preliminary work from which the remaining work submitted has developed, OR an element of collaborative work between PGR candidates, subject to meeting rules around the level of contribution and statement of authorship);
 - viii. meet the University's and any relevant departmental and - where applicable - programme-specific requirements for the format of the thesis and submission of the thesis and/or approved alternative assessment format (e.g. word count) (unless permission for an exception is granted, pre-submission, by SCA on the request of the relevant departmental Graduate School Board)
 - ix. not lead to liability under English law, including (but not limited to) intellectual property law, data protection law, defamation law, and discrimination law;
 - x. be deposited with the University post-examination in its original form or as a detailed record where the former is not appropriate (e.g. in the case of a performance) in accordance with University guidance .

Variation from the approved departmental assessment requirements

12.8 If a PGR wishes to deviate from the approved departmental assessment requirements (e.g. thesis word count, the nature of an approved alternative assessment format) for the programme on which

they are enrolled this must be approved, pre-submission, by SCA on the request of the relevant departmental Graduate School Board. The examiners must be informed of the approved exception by the department. If a PGR submits work that deviates from the approved departmental assessment requirements without prior SCA approval, the examiners should notify PGRA but continue with the examination process. It is then for the examiners to decide, as part of the examination process, whether, and if so in what way, the deviation from departmental requirements should affect the outcome (e.g. corrections, or revise and resubmit, or failure, depending on the nature of the transgression and with reference to the criteria for the PGR award in question (see section 2 of the PoRD).

Submission of the thesis for examination

- 12.9 PGRs must submit their thesis for examination (or re-examination) by the deadline specified on e:Vision (see section 7). PGRs must plan accordingly to achieve this and failure to submit by the submission deadline will result in automatic failure. Only in exceptional circumstances (e.g. documented wholesale disruption to the internet on the day of submission) will mitigation be granted for failure to submit by the deadline due to difficulties with the submission process.
- 12.10 Once a thesis has been submitted, it cannot be retracted or substituted for a different version (even if submitted prior to the final submission deadline) unless exceptional circumstances apply. PGRs must notify PGRA immediately if there is an issue with their submission.

Examiner appointment

- 12.11 Examiners are appointed by the SCA, acting on behalf of Senate, on the nomination of the relevant Graduate Chair. PGRA has delegated authority from the SCA to undertake external examiner approval within certain set parameters. Those examining a journal-style thesis or alternative format assessment should ensure that they are aware of the department's rules and the relevant University guidance.
- 12.12 At least two, and not more than three, examiners, including at least one external examiner, shall be individually appointed for each candidate. Where three examiners are appointed, two shall be external examiners. Where two external examiners are used, and there is no internal examiner, an independent chair should be appointed and one of the external examiners must be designated to fulfil the academic expectations normally assigned to the internal examiner following the examination (e.g. to look at any corrections).
- 12.13 Any candidate for a PGR award who is (or has been during the five years prior to the date on which they submit their thesis for examination) an Academic, Research or Teaching member of staff of the University at grade 6 or above (excluding PGRs offered grade 6 ART positions in the six months prior to submission or between submission and examination; also excluding Marie-Curie trainee positions and equivalent) shall be examined by at least two, and not more than three, examiners, two of whom shall be external examiners. This requirement is to reduce the risk of bias (positive or negative) towards the candidate and to protect the University from accusations of bias. Exemptions from this requirement may only be made by the SCA on the recommendation of the Graduate School Board concerned. Where a second external examiner is required, the candidate shall, in this instance, be liable for the examiner's fee unless they are completing the PGR award as a requirement of their employment contract in which case the department should be liable for the fee.

Independent chair

- 12.14 An independent chair should be a member of current academic staff in the relevant faculty (and not necessarily an expert on the subject of the thesis) other than the supervisor. The role of the chair (where used) is to communicate with the candidate and supervisor(s), arrange the oral examination, oversee the process, and to ensure that the examination is conducted according to the University's

policies and regulations.

- 12.15 An independent chair must be used: when there is no internal examiner or the internal examiner has been retired for more than 3 years, or when indicated by a PGR's SSP, or when required by SCA as being in the best interests of one or more of the parties. An independent chair is strongly recommended for an oral examination following a revise and resubmit outcome. An independent chair may be used when there is an inexperienced (or newly retired) internal, or an inexperienced external examiner, or on the request of a PGR or their supervisor and if approved by SCA.

Internal examiners

- 12.16 The role of the internal examiner is to communicate with the candidate and supervisor(s), arrange the oral examination, oversee the process, and to ensure that the examination is conducted according to the University's policies and regulations.
- 12.17 An internal examiner will normally be a member of the University's Academic, Research or Teaching staff, other than the candidate's supervisor(s). The internal examiner must be able to make an independent academic judgement on the candidate's thesis. **Full details regarding eligibility for appointment, and support for new internal examiners, are in Appendix 8 on the appointment of examiners.**

External examiners

- 12.18 An external examiner will normally be a senior member of the academic staff of another higher education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas. External examiners should be independent, impartial, of suitable professional standing and not have any known conflict of interest which might impinge on their role as external examiner. **Full details regarding eligibility for appointment are in Appendix 8 on the appointment of examiners.**

The role of the supervisor in the examination process

- 12.19 The roles of supervisor and examiner are quite separate and it is for this reason that the University has a policy that a candidate's supervisor(s) cannot be appointed as their internal examiner. A supervisor's main responsibility is to help the PGR to pursue his or her research and to present this work to best advantage. The role of an examiner is to determine whether work presented for examination meets the academic standard required. Thus, when a PGR discusses with their supervisor(s) the submission of the thesis, any endorsement by the supervisor(s) of the intention to submit in no way prejudices the outcome of the subsequent assessment, which is entirely a matter for the examiners. The supervisor(s) may discuss with their PGR the purpose and possible nature of the examination, while making it clear that they are unable to predict how the examination will be conducted, or its outcome.

Unexaminable theses

- 12.20 In cases of a thesis being rendered unexaminable as a result of remote (i.e. third-party) printing errors or file corruption, the examiners should notify PGRA as soon as possible, and no later than four weeks after receipt. PGRA will contact the candidate to request an examinable version of the thesis originally submitted for examination, to be submitted within five working days.

Requests for confidentiality

- 12.21 Where it has been agreed that the content of a candidate's thesis should not be divulged publicly, the examiners should honour the request: this may be particularly important in the case of

commercially-sponsored studentships and/or in the very rare cases where access to a thesis is to be restricted. In such cases, the candidate may be asked to provide an abstract suitable for placing in the public domain.

Requirement for an oral examination

12.22 The requirement for an oral examination is as follows:

MPhil, PhD, EngD

- (i) Every candidate for the MPhil, PhD or EngD degree is required to attend an oral examination on the subject of the thesis and on related matters. The oral examination forms an important part of the examination for the award of the degree; it is by no means simply a formality.

MA/MSc (by research)

- (i) Candidates for the degree of MA/MSc (by research) may be required, as a condition of their programme, to attend in person an oral examination on the subject of the thesis (or other materials submitted for examination) and on related matters. Where not required by the programme, an oral examination may nevertheless be required for an individual candidate, at the discretion of the examiners, in order to ensure that the work submitted for examination is the candidate's own or that the candidate meets the standard required for the degree. In both cases, the oral examination forms an important part of the examination for the award of the degree; it is by no means simply a formality. The decision as to whether or not to require a candidate to attend an oral examination should be made as soon as possible (and no later than six weeks) after the receipt of the thesis by the examiners.
- (ii) If an oral examination is not a requirement of the MA/MSc (by research) programme, there must be a robust procedure in place for the department to ensure that the work submitted for examination is the candidate's own (this might, for example, be an expectation that the candidate will give a presentation on their work, followed by a question and answer session in the presence of, and with input from, the internal examiner.
- (iii) Where an oral examination is held for an MA/MSc (by research) candidate then the process should follow that for MPhil/PhD candidates. Where an oral examination is not required (see (i) above) then the examiners should exchange preliminary reports, before agreeing a joint examination report (which may refer to the preliminary reports).

The purpose of the oral examination

12.23 The purpose of the oral examination is to allow the examiners the opportunity to explore and to satisfy themselves regarding the areas listed in points below:

MPhil, PhD, EngD

- (i) in the case of a PhD or EngD candidate, that the thesis represents a substantial original contribution to knowledge or understanding, and is worthy of publication, either in full or in an abridged form; or in the case of an MPhil candidate, that the thesis represents a recognizable original contribution to knowledge or understanding;
- (ii) that the candidate is well-acquainted with the general field of knowledge to which their research relates (the examiners should make a particular point of ensuring that the questions they ask at the oral examination serve to establish the candidate's wider background knowledge if this is not evident in the thesis);
- (iii) that there is evidence of training in, and the application of, appropriate research methods;

- (iv) that the work submitted is the candidate's own (or, if done in collaboration, that the candidate's share in the research is adequate);
- (v) that the mode of presentation is satisfactory.

MA/MSc (by research)

- (i) that the candidate has completed a piece of research commensurate with the period of study, including some original work;
- (ii) that the candidate has an adequate understanding of research methods;
- (iii) that the work submitted is the candidate's own (or, if done in collaboration, that the candidate's share in the research is adequate);
- (iv) that the mode of presentation is satisfactory.

- 12.24 The oral examination also allows the candidate an opportunity to respond to any shortcomings identified by the examiners.
- 12.25 In accordance with UK norms, oral examinations at York are 'closed', that is only the candidate and examiners are present (with the addition, in some instances, of an independent chair, independent observer or the supervisor).
- 12.26 Candidates are encouraged to access support in preparation for the oral examination. BRIC offers sessions on preparing for the oral examination and departments should also provide support, such as offering their PGRs the opportunity to undertake a mock oral examination (this should not aim to replicate the oral examination but rather to give a PGR an idea of the sorts of questions that they might expect).

Timing and location of the oral examination

- 12.27 It is the responsibility of the internal examiner (or the member of staff appointed as independent chair (see above), if no internal examiner is appointed) to make arrangements for the oral examination.
- 12.28 The internal examiner should agree on the date of the oral examination in consultation with the external examiner(s) and the candidate. The oral examination should be held within three months of the date of submission of the thesis. If a PGR is on a Student Visa, the Visa Compliance team must be consulted before any decision to delay or reschedule an oral examination is made.
- 12.29 Permission to hold the oral examination more than three months after the submission date due to examiners' availability must be obtained from PGRA (acting under powers delegated from the SCA) with candidate and examiners copied in.
- 12.30 Permission to hold the oral examination more than three months after the submission date due to a PGR's extenuating circumstances must be obtained from PGRA who will seek approval from SCA, following consultation with the examiners. Supporting evidence of the extenuating circumstances must be provided by, or on behalf of, the PGR and the oral examination should be held as soon as reasonably possible and normally no later than 12 months after the date of submission of the thesis.
- 12.31 If an oral examination is subject to continued postponement by a PGR without good reason (e.g. where supporting evidence for a postponement is lacking or weak), SCA may place a time-limit on holding the oral examination, after which the examiners will be permitted to choose: (i) at first attempt: a revise and submit, downgrade (with or without corrections) or fail outcome, or (ii) following a revise and resubmit outcome: downgrade (with or without corrections) or fail outcome.
- 12.32 The examination party (i.e. the candidate, the external examiner(s), and the internal examiner and/or the independent chair) must all participate in the oral examination. The oral examination should be

held at the University of York, with all the examination party physically present, unless alternative arrangements are approved (see below).

Off-site oral examinations (all the examination party are physically present but not at York)

- 12.33 A Graduate Chair may grant permission for off-site oral examination i.e. for the oral examination to be held away from the University of York - but with all the examination party physically present at the venue - as long as the premises are suitable for conducting an oral examination. A written proposal must be sent to the Graduate Chair from the internal examiner that indicates that the candidate and all members of the examination party are in agreement.

Hybrid oral examinations (the candidate is physically present but an examiner is remote)

- 12.34 The Graduate Chair may grant permission for a hybrid oral examination i.e. where the candidate is physically present at York (or approved off-site venue) with at least one other member of the examination party but one or more other members of the examination party participates in the oral examination remotely (via a video-conference link). A written proposal must be sent to the Graduate Chair from the internal examiner that indicates that all members of the examination party are in agreement. Hybrid oral examinations will typically be used where a department believes that the most suitable external examiner is international and it makes sense for that individual not to travel to York.

Online oral examinations (the candidate is remote)

- 12.35 Online oral examinations (i.e. where the candidate participates in the oral examination remotely (by a video-conference link), without being accompanied by any other member of the examination party) are not an automatic right. For permission for an online oral examination to be granted - by PGRA (acting under powers delegated from the SCA) - the request must be submitted by the Graduate Chair to PGRA on the required form, which includes notification that the examiners' and the candidate have given their agreement. Online oral examinations are not appropriate where there are any concerns about the candidate in terms of academic misconduct, or there are likely to be practical difficulties in establishing a reliable and safe internet connection. It is recommended that online oral examinations are avoided, where possible, where a department has concerns about a candidate's well-being or where a downgrade or fail outcome is likely. [Guidance on online vivas is available](#).

Preparing for and conducting the oral examination

- 12.36 Each examiner should prepare a preliminary report on the thesis (on the correct form in the candidate's Google examination folder) which reflects their independent academic judgement and identifies the principal issues which they wish to raise in the oral examination (where relevant). Once both examiners have completed their independent preliminary reports (and prior to the oral examination, where relevant), access should be provided to each other's reports.
- 12.37 Before the oral examination, the supervisor should ensure that the examiners are made aware of any disabilities or other circumstances (e.g. exceptional stress) that may affect the candidate's performance and if the candidate needs specific arrangements to be put in place because of disability, exceptional stress and/or cultural differences. If the candidate has a disability, reasonable adjustments to the examination process (e.g. the provision of longer rest breaks) may be needed to accommodate this.
- 12.38 In order to ensure that the oral examination is conducted fairly, the internal examiner should act as chair of the examination and shall ensure that it is conducted in accordance with this Policy. Where two external examiners are used, and there is no internal examiner, the department concerned should provide an independent chair (see above) and the independent chair shall submit a brief report on the

conduct of the oral examination to the SCA, if they believe this to be necessary and/or on the request of the SCA.

- 12.39 At the request of the candidate, and with the consent of the examiners, the supervisor or another member of academic or professional support staff approved by the relevant Graduate Chair may be present at the oral examination as a silent spectator.
- 12.40 Care should be taken to make the candidate feel at ease at the examination. To this end, the layout of the examination room should be given careful thought and provision should be made for short breaks/refreshments etc. as required, particularly for longer oral examinations. In addition, the examiners should consider, for example, starting with general comments or questions, or whether positive points can be made about the thesis. It is also important to give the candidate ample opportunity to talk about what they consider to be the strengths of the thesis.
- 12.41 Candidates should have access to a copy of their thesis in the oral examination, and this may be annotated, but they should not bring any additional materials to the examination without the prior agreement of the internal and external examiners (to allow, for example, a candidate to demonstrate a computer simulation). No new research should be presented at the oral examination.

Recording the oral examination

- 12.42 The department must ensure that a recording is made of *all* oral examinations for research degrees, as a means of providing an objective record. **Appendix 1 provides full details of how recordings must be made, their storage, usage and disposal.**

Non-attendance at the oral examination

- 12.43 First attempt: if the candidate does not attend their scheduled oral examination, the examiners may choose between a revise and resubmit, downgrade (with or without corrections), or fail outcome.
- 12.44 Revise and resubmit: if the candidate does not attend their scheduled oral examination, the examiners may choose between a downgrade (with or without corrections) or fail outcome.
- 12.45 If the candidate is prevented from attending their scheduled oral examination due to a serious unforeseen extenuating circumstance (typically a medical emergency, see Appendix 11) then the department should make a case to SCA (with appropriate evidence) for a rescheduled oral examination to be treated as if for the first time. If the case is accepted by SCA, PGRA should be informed and asked to grant an extension to the examination date. The rescheduled oral examination should take place as soon as possible, normally within one month of the original date.

Compromised oral examination

- 12.46 If a PGR's performance in an oral examination is significantly compromised by a serious unforeseen extenuating circumstance (typically when a PGR falls seriously ill within the examination or is subsequently found to have been seriously ill in the oral examination, see Appendix 11), the department may make a case to SCA (with appropriate evidence) for a rescheduled oral examination to be treated as if for the first time. If the case is accepted by SCA, PGRA should be informed and asked to grant an extension to the examination date. The rescheduled oral examination should take place as soon as possible, normally within one month of the original date.

Examination outcomes

- 12.47 Following the (oral) examination of a candidate for a research degree, the following recommendations

are open to the examiners. **Further guidance for examiners on when the various examination outcomes should be used is available in Appendix 9.**

For PhD and EngD candidates

(a) If the examiners agree that the criteria for the degree concerned (as set out in section 2) have been **satisfied** they may recommend:

- (i) that the degree should be awarded with no corrections; *OR*
- (ii) that the degree should be awarded subject to corrections to the thesis, to be completed within three months of the candidate receiving the list of corrections, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners;; *OR*
- (iii) that the degree should be awarded subject to corrections to the thesis, to be completed within six months of the candidate receiving the list of corrections, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners

In choosing between (ii) and (iii), the examiners should take into account the scale of the corrections and the other commitments of the PGR (e.g. full-time work). If in doubt, examiners should opt for (ii), as a PGR can submit their corrections earlier than the six-month deadline.

(b) If the examiners agree that the criteria for the degree concerned (as set out in section 2) **have not yet been satisfied** AND it is reasonable to assume that the criteria **could** be satisfied if the PGR undertakes further work, as set out by the examiners, AND that this further work **could** realistically be completed within 12 months, from the date on which they received notification of the revisions to be made, in which to revise and resubmit the thesis for re-examination (referral). An oral examination is a required part of the re-examination. A candidate will normally be given only one opportunity to revise and resubmit their thesis.

(c) If the examiners agree that the criteria for the degree concerned (as set out in section 2) **have not been satisfied** they may recommend:

- (i) that the degree of MPhil should be awarded with no corrections to thesis; *OR*
- (ii) that the degree of MPhil should be awarded subject to corrections to the thesis, to be completed within three months of the candidate receiving the list of corrections, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners; *OR*
- (iii) that the degree of MPhil should be awarded subject to corrections to the thesis, to be completed within six months of the candidate receiving the list of corrections, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners; *OR*
- (iv) that the degree of MA (by research) or MSc (by research) should be awarded with no corrections to thesis; *OR*
- (v) that the degree of MA (by research) or MSc (by research) should be awarded subject to corrections to the thesis, to be completed within two months of the candidate receiving the list of corrections, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners; *OR*
- (vi) that no degree should be awarded;

Additionally, for EngD candidates:

- (vii) that the degree of MSc should be awarded.

Note that the EngD and iPhDs have Postgraduate Diploma and Postgraduate Certificate exit awards from the taught component of the programme.

For MPhil candidates

(a) If the examiners agree that the criteria for the degree concerned (as set out in section 2) have been **satisfied** they may recommend:

- (i) that the degree should be awarded with no corrections; *OR*
- (ii) that the degree should be awarded subject to corrections to the thesis, to be completed within three months of the candidate receiving the list of corrections, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners; *OR*
- (iii) that the degree should be awarded subject to corrections to the thesis, to be completed within six months of the candidate receiving the list of corrections, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners

In choosing between (ii) and (iii), the examiners should take into account the scale of the corrections and the other commitments of the PGR (e.g. full-time work). If in doubt, examiners should opt for (ii), as a PGR can submit their corrections earlier than the six-month deadline.

(b) If the examiners agree that the criteria for the degree concerned (as set out in section 2) **have not yet been satisfied** AND it is reasonable to assume that the criteria **could** be satisfied if the PGR undertakes further work, as set out by the examiners, AND that this further work **could** realistically be completed within 12 months, they may recommend: that the candidate should be allowed a period not exceeding 12 months, from the date on which s/he received notification of the revisions to be made, in which to revise and resubmit the thesis for examination (referral). An oral examination is a required part of the re-examination. A candidate will normally be given only one opportunity to revise and resubmit their thesis.

(c) If the examiners agree that the criteria for the degree concerned (as set out in section 2) **have not been satisfied** they may recommend:

- (i) that the degree of MA (by research) or MSc (by research) should be awarded with no corrections to thesis; *OR*
- (ii) that the degree of MA (by research) or MSc (by research) should be awarded subject to corrections to the thesis, to be completed within two months of the candidate receiving the list of corrections, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners; *OR*
- (iii) that no degree should be awarded.

For MA/MSc (by research) candidates

(a) If the examiners agree that the criteria for the degree concerned (as set out in section 2) have been **satisfied** they may recommend:

- (i) that the degree should be awarded with no corrections; *OR*
- (ii) that the degree should be awarded subject to corrections to the thesis, to be completed within two months of receiving the list of corrections, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners;

(b) If the examiners agree that the criteria for the degree concerned (as set out in section 2) **have not yet been satisfied** AND it is reasonable to assume that the criteria **could** be satisfied if the PGR undertakes further work, as set out by the examiners, AND that this further work **could** realistically be completed within 4 months, they may recommend: that the candidate should be allowed a period not exceeding four months, from the date on which they received notification of the revisions to be made, in which to revise and resubmit the thesis for examination (referral). An oral examination will be a required part of the re-examination if it is a condition of the programme at the first attempt or if the examiners deem it necessary. A candidate will normally be given only one opportunity to revise and

resubmit their thesis.

(c) If the examiners agree that the criteria for the degree concerned (as set out in section 2) **have not been satisfied** they may recommend: that no degree should be awarded.

It should be noted that a mark-scale is not applicable to an MA/MSc (by research), and the degree of MA/MSc (by research) may not be awarded with distinction or merit.

Completion of examiners' reports

- 12.48 The examiners should complete the Examination Outcome form and Examiners Joint Report form (in the candidate's Google examination folder) within two weeks of the oral examination (if held). The report should conclude with a clear recommendation indicating whether or not the candidate has satisfied the requirements for the degree concerned.
- 12.49 The Examiners Joint Report should contain sufficient detail to enable the SCA to assess the scope and significance of the work contained in the thesis. In particular, it should give a brief description of the subject matter. The report should go on to contain specific statements about each of the matters listed above under 'the purpose of the oral examination'. The Examiners' Joint Report form contains a separate section for comments on the oral examination (where applicable). The examiners should give a brief account of the length of the examination, the ground covered in it, and the level of the candidate's performance. If the examiners have had to use the oral examination to establish the candidate's wider background knowledge, this should be stated; and they should also give an indication of how well the candidate responded to the questions concerned.
- 12.50 In any case where the examiners recommend that the candidate should not be awarded any degree or should be awarded a degree for which they were not enrolled (i.e. an MPhil or MA/MSc (by research) if a PhD or EngD candidate; an MA/MSc (by research) if an MPhil candidate), it is important that the examiners' report should include a clear and full statement as to why they are not prepared to recommend that the candidate should be given the opportunity to revise and resubmit the thesis. In such cases it may be open to the candidate to appeal against the examiners' recommendations on the grounds of unfair or improper conduct of the examination, or prejudice on the part of the examiners, but not their academic judgement.

Ratification of the examiners' reports and approval of the result

- 12.51 The Examiners' Joint Report should be submitted to the Graduate Chair in the department concerned for ratification as soon as possible, and in any case within two weeks of the date of the oral examination. Where no oral examination is held (for example, in the case of a candidate for the MA or MSc (by research)), the examiners' report should be submitted to the department concerned as soon as possible and in any case within three months of the date of the submission of the thesis for examination.
- 12.52 After departmental ratification, the Joint Examiners Report should will be sent to PGRA, who will forward it to the candidate and the supervisor. PGRA will arrange for the result to be approved by a member of the SCA, acting on behalf of the Committee.

Dealing with corrections

- 12.53 If the examiners recommend that the degree should be awarded subject to corrections , they should submit their list of corrections in the Examiners Joint Report form and submit any other corrections material (e.g. an annotated thesis) to PGRA within two weeks of the examination. PGRA will process and send the corrections to the candidate within two weeks of receipt from the examiners.

- 12.54 The final version of the corrected thesis (plus a 'tracked changes' version of the corrected thesis and document that summarises the changes made) must be submitted by the candidate electronically to PGRA within the timeframe set out in the examination outcome section (counting from the date on which the candidate was sent the list of corrections). Failure to submit the final version of the corrected thesis by the deadline will result in failure of the degree. PGRA will send the corrected thesis to the internal examiner, who should consider the corrections and send a completed corrections approval form to PGRA within two weeks of receipt of the corrected thesis. Where there is no internal examiner (or the internal examiner is unavailable) the corrections should be considered by an (the) external examiner (as they know the thesis). The Graduate Chair should serve as the point of liaison between the PGR and the external examiner in this case to ensure that due process is followed and the PGR not disadvantaged.
- 12.55 Any consultation between the candidate and the internal examiner about the direction or appropriateness of corrections must happen well in advance of the deadline for the submission of the corrected thesis as no further revisions can be made after submission of the final version of the corrected thesis. If the corrections are not made to the satisfaction of the internal examiner, the result is a fail.

Deposit of the thesis and conferral of the award

- 12.56 If the examiners recommend that a degree should be awarded, and following the completion, to the satisfaction of the internal or another of the examiners, of any required corrections, the candidate must deposit the thesis in accordance with the University's requirements (see also Deposit of research data below). Deposited material remains the property of the University.
- 12.57 The approval of the award following examination will usually be communicated to the candidate within two weeks of the deposit of the final version of the thesis to the White Rose E-thesis Online repository.
- 12.58 The award will be conferred (i.e. the degree certificate issued) to the candidate at the next available degree ceremony. If the award being conferred is PhD, the candidate may choose to use the title of Dr from the date of conferral although many opt to use the title from the date of the receipt of the award letter.

Failure to deposit the final version of the thesis

- 12.59 Failure to deposit the final version of the thesis in accordance with the University's requirements, and within the deadlines stipulated in the relevant correspondence from PGRA, will mean that the candidate will not have met the requirements of the degree, and will be deemed to have failed.

Disposal or deposit of research data

- 12.60 PGRs should, with reference to their data management plan (see section 11), ensure that their research data is treated appropriately at the end of their programme. Where research data is archived and shared in a data repository this should be recorded when the thesis is deposited.

Disagreement between examiners

- 12.61 In the rare cases where the examiners fail to agree between themselves whether or not a candidate has satisfied the requirements for a particular degree and the departmental Graduate Chair (acting on behalf of Graduate School Board) is unable to resolve the disagreement, the examiners should submit individual reports to PGRA to be put to the SCA together with a recommendation for the appointment of an additional external examiner. The additional external examiner will decide, on the basis of the other examiners' reports, of the thesis, and of the recording of the oral examination (where available)

whether or not the candidate has satisfied the requirements for the degree. The decision of the additional external examiner, which will be communicated by the University to the other examiners, will be final.

Revision and resubmission of the thesis

- 12.62 If the examiners agree that the requirements for the degree concerned have not yet been satisfied but there is the potential for the requirements to be satisfied if the PGR undertakes further work, as set out by the examiners, and this further work could realistically be completed with the time allotted (see above), they may recommend that the thesis should be revised and resubmitted for examination. PGRA will send an official letter of notification to the candidate once the examiners' report (plus the list of required revisions) has been received in PGRA and has been approved by the SCA.
- 12.63 If the examiners recommend the revision and resubmission of the thesis, they should submit their list of required revisions in the Examiners Joint Report form and submit any other revisions material (eg an annotated thesis) to PGRA within two weeks of the examination. PGRA will process and send the required revisions to the candidate within two weeks of receipt from the examiners.
- 12.64 The candidate should *not* expect to receive a mechanical list of revisions to be made, particularly when the revisions required involve major improvements in the depth, intellectual quality, analysis, argument or structure of the thesis. If the candidate requires any clarification regarding the required revisions after receipt of the examination report, the candidate should contact their supervisor who can then judge if it is necessary to request further clarification from the internal examiner. Neither candidate nor supervisor should contact the external examiner directly without their express permission.
- 12.65 The University expects that candidates will be given a fair and reasonable opportunity to revise the thesis to the required standard, whatever the circumstances of the resubmission. To this end, the candidate should be offered the opportunity of an initial meeting with the supervisor to discuss the examiners' requirements for revision. Thereafter, the need for further meetings will vary from case to case, according to, for example, the availability of the candidate and the extent of the revisions needed. The University accepts that there may be cases in which the candidate/supervisor relationship comes under strain as a result of the examiners' decision to refer the thesis; and in these cases it may be more appropriate, at the discretion of the Graduate Chair of the departmental concerned, for another member of the department to take on responsibility for mediating feedback. Candidates in their revise and resubmit period will retain access to computing and library facilities.

Examination following revision and resubmission

[Note that the option for external examiners to waive an oral examination following a revise and resubmit outcome ceased on 1st October 2024. PGRs who had been given a revise and resubmit outcome before this date are not affected by this change.]

- 12.66 The candidate should prepare and submit for examination their revised thesis as per the process for the original submission, and as specified in the [University's requirements](#). In addition to their revised thesis, the candidate must submit a document which details how the revised thesis addresses the points raised by the examiners in the Corrections/Revisions form. The document should be sufficiently detailed (including examples where relevant) to show clearly where and how all the points in the Corrections/Revisions form have been addressed. The examiners may, in addition, require a 'tracked changes' version of thesis and, if so, should specify this in the Corrections/Revisions form. The candidate must pay the prescribed re-examination fee before submission.
- 12.67 The re-examination of a candidate following the revision and resubmission of the thesis will normally be conducted by the individuals who conducted the original examination. In exceptional circumstances (for example due to a substantial change in the health or employment circumstances of

an examiner), a new examiner or examiners may need to be appointed by the SCA.

- 12.68 Where an examiner must be replaced between an initial examination and a re-examination of the thesis, the second examination will normally have the same status as any other re-examination. The new examiner should have access to the original examiners' reports in order to inform their assessment, but the primary measure of success should be the academic judgement of the examiners as to whether the standards of the award have been met, rather than whether the revisions outlined by the original examiner have been made. Exceptionally, where the examiners agree that the change of examiner may have resulted in conflicting views about the nature of appropriate revisions, they may recommend (to the SCA) a further referral of the thesis.
- 12.69 An oral examination must be scheduled within three months of the submission of the revised thesis. It is recommended that an independent chair is appointed to oversee the oral examination. A second oral examination is required as, by definition, a revise and resubmit outcome indicates that the first submission was not of a suitable standard. That being the case, the original oral examination could not have been a valid test of the work as a whole, and certainly cannot have been a test of the later submission that is, by definition, substantially revised.
- 12.70 Each examiner must submit an independent preliminary report on the revised thesis.
- 12.71 The examiners must complete and submit the Examination Outcome form and Examiners Joint Report form (in the candidate's Google examination folder) within two weeks of the oral examination.
- 12.72 The outcomes of the examination are the same recommendations as listed above under 'examination outcomes' except that a candidate's thesis may only be revised and resubmitted on one occasion (i.e. outcome (b) does not apply).
- 12.73 An oral examination can only be waived if the examiners are proposing a downgrade (with or without corrections) or fail outcome AND a case is made to - and accepted by - SCA that an oral examination would be obsolete i.e. could not alter the examination outcome. In this case, the examiners should exchange their independent preliminary reports, before completing and submitting the Examination Outcome Form and Examiners Joint Report form, as soon as possible and in any case within three months of the date of the submission of the revised thesis for examination.

13. Dissemination of research results, intellectual property rights and responsibilities

- 13.1 The University requires all PGRs to obtain an ORCID(tm) personal identifier (ID). ORCID gives researchers and authors a single unique ID which works across the research landscape, ensuring that all research outputs and activities are correctly attributed. PGRs will be expected to submit their ORCID ID upon enrolment and, if not submitted at enrolment, required to have signed up for an ORCID ID by the first Thesis Advisory Panel meeting. PGRs are expected to comply with reasonable requests from the University and funding bodies (where applicable) for recording the outputs of research conducted as part of a PGR programme, and career progression information.
- 13.2 PGRs will be encouraged to make presentations on the results of their research in the University and at external meetings, and where appropriate to different audiences (e.g., academic peers, undergraduate students, school pupils). They should receive appropriate training for this purpose. PGRs should also be encouraged to submit work for publication during the course of their studies, where appropriate. PGRs are bound by the University's Policy on the publication of research, and authorship of publications should be decided in line with University policy on authorship.

Open research

- 13.3 The University is committed to the values, principles and culture of open research. PGRs should work with their supervisors to explore how open research practices might apply to their work.
- 13.4 In line with the University's commitment to Open Research, all theses deposited by PGRs after examination will be available to the general public, in full, for consultation and for reproduction (as permitted in copyright law), unless approval is obtained for embargo or redaction (as set out below). Where PGRs create scholarly articles during or as a consequence of their programme, they are strongly encouraged to follow the principles set out in Research Publications and Open Access Policy.

Embargo and redaction policy

- 13.5 In certain circumstances, it may be appropriate for a thesis to be embargoed (ie withheld from the general public and, normally with the exception of an abstract, none of the material reproduced) for a fixed period AND/OR made available with redaction (the PGR should deposit a redacted version of the thesis, which will be made publicly available, in addition to their examined (unredacted) thesis).
- 13.6 Embargo or redaction may be for one or more of the following reasons: (i) intent to publish; (ii) commercial sensitivity; (iii) data protection compliance; (iv) issues of health and safety; (v) unlicensed reproduction of third-party copyright material (copyright guidance is provided by the Library), (vi) exemption under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. In considering whether to embargo or redact a thesis, all appropriate considerations must be taken into account, including funding requirements, intellectual property issues and Research Data Management expectations.
- 13.7 A request for embargo or redaction may be made by the PGR and/or the supervisor(s) and/or the funder of the PGR's research, subject to a valid reason as set out above.
- 13.8 Any embargo period (counting from the date of the Award) should be as short as reasonably possible, ideally no more than 12 months. Where a PGR is in receipt of ANY UKRI money (i.e. including collaborative projects such as CASE and CDAs), the maximum embargo period is normally 12 months (counting from the date of the Award) and a convincing case must be made for the approval of any longer embargo.
- 13.9 An embargo of up to 12 months (total period, including any extensions) can be approved by the PGR and their supervisor(s). An embargo of between 13 and 24 months (total period, including any extensions) requires the additional approval of the Graduate Chair. An embargo of between 24 months and five years (total period, including any extensions), requires the additional approval of the Dean of YGRS. Lifting an embargo in advance of the set date requires the consent of the PGR and their supervisor(s) and the funder if applicable.
- 13.10 If a dispute about the embargo of a thesis arises between the PGR and their supervisor(s), the decision of the supervisor(s) is final; if a dispute arises between supervisors, the decision of the Graduate Chair is final.
- 13.11 Funder requirements around permitting or restricting access to the thesis (or material within the thesis) may be determined from the outset in the funder's terms and conditions and/or a studentship agreement OR a written request made by the funder (to the supervisor/PGR) when the thesis is finalised. Approval for any requested embargo period should be sought as above.
- 13.12 The PGR and their supervisor(s) are jointly responsible for adhering to any embargo or redaction terms agreed with the funder at the outset and/or facilitating reasonable requests from the funder for embargo or redaction once the thesis is finalised.

- 13.13 A thesis may be subject to a long-term (more than 5 years) or permanent embargo in the following circumstances: (i) contractual agreement with a funder where they are exceptional grounds; (ii) issues of national or personal security, or (iii) when requested by the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research for a breach of the Code of Practice on Research Integrity. All requests for long-term or permanent embargo must be approved by the Dean of YGRS and the SCA. Redaction for third-party copyright infringement will be indefinite unless notification of clearance is received.

Copyright of thesis

- 13.14 Except by formal agreement between the PGR and an external organisation, copyright in the original material in a thesis is owned by the PGR. In many cases, however, other forms of intellectual property arising from the thesis, including patentable inventions and software, may be subject to contractual conditions, for example with sponsors of the research, which may require ownership to be vested in a third party or in the University. Furthermore, in many instances, intellectual property is jointly conceived by a PGR together with his or her supervisor(s) or with other colleagues in the same research group. In such cases, the University would expect to own such IPR but would share any benefits accruing from its exploitation with the PGR according to the University's Intellectual Property Regulation ([Regulation 12](#)).

Contractual responsibilities to external organisations

- 13.15 Where the PGR studentship is sponsored by a commercial or other external organisation, such as UKRI, to which the University owes contractual responsibilities, the supervisor will ensure that the PGR receives and, where appropriate, signs a copy of the contract covering the research.

14. PGR complaints and appeals

- 14.1 The University has a [complaints procedure](#) for dealing with complaints of an academic and non-academic nature from PGRs and others. There is a [specific procedure](#) for dealing with complaints relating to staff misconduct, such as harassment or bullying of any kind.
- 14.2 PGRs may [appeal](#) if, following examination, they fail to achieve the qualification sought, or in a number of other circumstances concerning their academic progression set out in [Regulation 2.8](#). Responsibility for considering appeals has been delegated by the Senate to [Special Cases](#) (not PGR Special Cases).
- 14.3 If a PGR receives an examination outcome of a revise and resubmit or downgrade and they decide to appeal this decision they will still be required to abide by the approved timetable for the submission of the revised/thesis for the lower award (as set out in section 12) unless exceptional circumstances apply.

15. Research away from York (excluding PGRs on distance learning PGR programmes)

- 15.1 Non-distance-learning PGRs may need to undertake research away from York for a variety of reasons. This may be for data collection (e.g. fieldwork, archival work) or consultation with reference institutions (libraries/archives/museums). It may also be because they are undertaking their research in industry as part of an approved studentship or undertaking research in a partner academic institution. The ability of PGRs subject to UKVI restrictions to undertake research away from York may be limited by UKVI rules and the University cannot override these restrictions.
- 15.2 Where a PGR is undertaking research away from York, the main supervisor retains primary

responsibility for maintaining an oversight of the PGR and their research project. Supervisory meetings and TAP meetings should continue as normal but may be held by video-conferencing rather than face-to-face. Consideration must be given as to how research training and participation in other academic activities can be facilitated while the PGR is away from York.

- 15.3 Where a PGR is undertaking research away from York, formal reviews of progress must be conducted in accordance with Appendix 2, and any standard attendance requirements of the department relating to this process must be met as normal unless permission is sought from PGRA for the use of video-conferencing (decision taken by the Student Administration Manager (PGRA) or their designated alternate).
- 15.4 Approval for undertaking research away from York at a partner academic institution (university or research institute) or in industry is covered below. Approval for undertaking research away from York for the purpose of data collection, or consultation with reference institutions, rests with the supervisor (for periods of under three months duration) or with the departmental Graduate School Board for periods of over three months duration or where this is indicated by a higher level of risk (e.g. some fieldwork and overseas travel). The period of time that a PGR may spend undertaking research away from York will normally be up to twelve months for a full-time PhD PGR, nine months for a full-time MPhil PGR or six months for a full-time MA/MSc (by research) PGR (or equivalent periods for part-time PGRs).
- 15.5 PGRs are responsible for informing their departmental postgraduate administrator(s) when they will be conducting research away from York, and for completing the University's travel log prior to travel overseas. Student Visa holders must also report their temporary change of student location.

PGR exchange agreements

- 15.6 Exchange agreements can be set up at PGR level (either exclusively PGR level or allowing some transference between taught and PGR numbers). PGR exchange agreements should follow the approval process set out in the Policy Statement on Study Abroad. The exchange must be approved by the departmental GSB and then by the Dean of YGRS on behalf of PPPC. Each incoming/outgoing PGR on a PGR exchange programme should receive an individual agreement that sets out the supervision and other practical arrangements that they will receive at York/their host institution. Incoming exchange PGRs should apply via the usual postgraduate admissions process for visiting PGRs.

PGR programmes delivered in collaboration with others

- 15.7 The University recognises that there are circumstances in which the value of a PGR programme at York may be enhanced through collaboration with another academic institution (university or research institute) or with industry.
- 15.8 An external co-supervisor for a PGR enrolled on a PGR programme at York should be approved by the department concerned (see section 5) and recorded on SkillsForge. The department is responsible for ensuring that the co-supervisor is qualified to take on the role (including undertaking right to work checks if required), that there is a written agreement between the parties concerned (see section 5), and that the co-supervisor has an understanding of relevant York policies and procedures to enable them to undertake their role successfully.

Arrangements involving industry for individual York PGRs

- 15.9 An individual may, with the approval of departmental Graduate School Board concerned, have a co-supervisor based in industry (see above) and/or undertake their research, or part of their research, at a suitably equipped company as part of an industry-based studentship award. Where a PGR is based wholly or partly in industry, the PGR, the department and the company will be bound by an individual

PGR agreement which should be sent to PGRA (for approval by the Student Administration Manager (PGRA) or their designated alternate)).

Arrangements involving academic institutions for individual York PGRs

External supervision and limited external academic input

- 15.10 An **individual** PGR enrolled on a PGR programme at York may, with the approval of the departmental Graduate School Board concerned, receive academic input from a partner academic institution (university or research institute) in the form of the appointment of a co-supervisor (see above), training, taught courses, or membership of the Thesis Advisory Panel but not involving a period of research at the partner, enrolment as a PGR at the partner or an award from the partner (see below for alternative models). Any financial implications are the responsibility of the department concerned. Responsibility for monitoring such arrangements lies with the departmental Graduate School Board.

Outgoing visiting PGRs

- 15.11 An individual PGR enrolled for a PGR programme at York may undertake a period of research at another academic institution (including enrolment as a visiting PGR) as part of their York programme. Such PGRs will not be awarded a qualification by the other institution. They will maintain their enrolment at York and (unless specific alternative arrangements are agreed by the University) will continue to pay tuition fees at York during this period which will normally be up to twelve months for a full-time PhD PGR, nine months for a full-time MPhil PGR or six months for a full-time MA/MSc (by research) PGR (or equivalent periods for part-time PGRs). The University's Policy Statement on Study Abroad should be consulted where an academic institution is based outside the UK.

Arrangements involving other academic institutions at programme level

Academic input from one or more partner institutions leading to a University of York award only

- 15.12 A departmental Graduate School Board may seek approval from YGRSB for a PGR **programme** leading to a qualification of the University of York which requires or permits academic input from one or more academic partner institutions, for example where York is a member of an approved multi-institution Doctoral Training Partnership (DTP) or international research collaboration. The academic input may be a requirement for a period of study at a partner (normally up to twelve months for a full-time PhD PGR, nine months for a full-time MPhil PGR or six months for a full-time MA/MSc (by research) PGR, or equivalent periods for part-time PGRs) which may involve enrolment at the partner institution as a visiting PGR and/or academic input in the form of training, credit-bearing modules, appointment of co-supervisors or external membership of Thesis Advisory Panels.
- 15.13 Where credit-bearing modules are taken at an academic partner, the partner will be expected to provide a transcript for the PGRs and the result will be recorded on the PGRs' records at York as recognition of prior learning.

Double and joint PhD programmes

- 15.14 Where strategically justified, the University may collaborate with other, mainly international, universities to offer double and joint PhD programmes. The rules that govern a double or joint PhD programme (e.g. in terms of selection, admission, induction, supervision, progress and review arrangements, training, and assessment) will normally be negotiated between the institutions, so that the minimum requirements of both can be met. When considering a double or joint PhD programme, YGRS will need to give approval to any exceptions to the PoRD and will only do this where there is

good reason and when YGRS can be assured that the standard of the PhD and the quality of the PGR experience will not be compromised. Senate approval may be required for joint or double PhD programmes. YGRS will not normally consider requests for cotutelle agreements leading to joint or double awards with other (normally international) universities on the request of individual PGRs or supervisors. It will consider requests for cotutelle agreements leading to joint or double awards as part of strategic projects and/or with strategic partners.

16. Arrangements for non-York PGRs

Supervision of individual non-York PGRs by York academics

- 16.1 An academic at York may serve as a co-supervisor for an individual PGR enrolled on a PGR programme at another awarding academic institution subject to the constraints set out in the [University Policy on Work for Outside Bodies](#). Supervision by an academic from York under such an arrangement does not bestow on the PGR concerned any rights or benefits associated with enrolment at York, nor any entitlement to an award from York.

Incoming visiting PGRs

- 16.2 An individual PGR enrolled at another awarding academic institution may enrol as a visiting PGR at York, normally for a maximum period of eighteen months. Applications must be made through the usual postgraduate admissions process for visiting PGRs, and be considered by departments in the normal way. As a condition of admission, applicants must meet the University's normal admission requirements, including the minimum English language proficiency requirements of the relevant department/programme. Unless specific alternative arrangements are agreed by the University (e.g. under a PGR exchange scheme, see section 15), visiting PGRs pay tuition fees at York pro rata to their period of study. Visiting PGRs are not eligible for the award of any qualification from York. Visiting PGRs should receive the same supervisory input as registered PGRs. Visiting PGRs are not required to undergo TAP meetings or formal reviews of progress.

Programme level academic input from York that does not lead to a University of York award

- 16.3 A departmental Graduate School Board may seek approval from PPPC for PGRs enrolled at from another university in an approved multi-institution DTP or international research collaboration with York to be required or permitted to undertake a period of study at York and/or receive academic input from York in the form of training, credit-bearing modules, appointment of co-supervisors or external membership of Thesis Advisory Panels. Where appropriate, York may maintain outline PGR records for these individuals.

This Policy applies to all PGRs who commenced a PGR programme after October 2013. The Policy also applies to PGRs who commenced a PGR programme before October 2013, with the exception that changes to the composition of existing supervisory teams and/or Thesis Advisory Panels are not required if the department believes that this would not be in the best interests of the PGRs concerned.

Appendix 1: Policy on the recording of second progress review meetings and oral examinations for research degrees

In accordance with the PoRD, a recording is made of second and final progress review meetings (i.e. where a PGR is making a second attempt at meeting the relevant University progression criteria and the written evidence submitted is not sufficient to satisfy the progression panel that the PGR has met or exceeded the relevant University progression criteria) and final oral examinations.

Purpose of the recording

- 1.1 The recording (audio or audio-visual) provides an objective record of a second progress review meeting/oral examination that can be used: (i) in the event of an appeal or other concern raised about the review meeting/oral examination, or (ii), in the case of an oral examination only, in the event that the examiners have failed to agree between themselves whether or not the candidate has satisfied the requirements for a particular degree and the departmental Graduate School Board has been unable to resolve the disagreement. In the latter case, the recording will be heard by the subsequently appointed adjudicating examiner.
- 1.2 The recording will not be copied or replayed except in situations (i) or (ii) above, which are the sole purposes for which the recording is made. The University's understanding of the position in relation to statutory disclosure is set out below.

Responsibility for recordings

- 1.3 Graduate School Boards must ensure that all second progress review meetings/oral examinations (whether in person, hybrid or online) for which they are responsible are recorded, or, in the exceptional cases detailed below, that permission from the SCA is obtained for the use of an independent observer.
- 1.4 Only the official recording is permitted; participants are not permitted to make their own recordings.

Notification of external examiners in the case of oral examinations

- 1.5 Graduate School Boards are asked to inform external examiners prior to nomination that the oral examination will be recorded and to confirm their assent on the Appointment of Examiners form. Prospective external examiners should be notified that the recordings will be held and treated in confidence.

Notification of PGRs

- 1.6 Graduate School Boards are asked to ensure that their PGRs are aware that second progress review meetings/oral examinations will be recorded and understand the reasons for this. PGRs should be notified that the recordings will be held and treated in confidence.

Equipment including the use of back-up recording devices/methods

- 1.7 The University makes appropriate recording equipment available to departments for this purpose or departments may use a built-in record function when an oral examination is taking place via video-conferencing. The recording should be made using equipment/technology authorised for this purpose by the SCA (and in the case of the former, supplied by departments from the University's Audio Visual Centre).
- 1.8 To ensure availability of recording equipment, a diary should be kept by each Graduate School Board

of all prospective second progress review meetings/oral examinations for which they are responsible.

- 1.9 Departments should ensure that there is a back up means of recording the second progress review meeting/oral examination (this might include recording using a mobile phone) in case the chosen method fails. If the back-up recording method is used, everyone present should be asked to give their consent when the recording starts and the recording should be treated in accordance with the policy.

Connection problems when video-conferencing

- 1.10 Where participation by video-conferencing has been approved, participation in a second progress review meeting/oral examination should always start as an audio-video conference call. Should connection problems arise at a point where the examiners can not reasonably conclude the second progress review meeting/oral examination, the review meeting/oral examination can move to audio-only (i.e. audio-only conference call or telephone call), but only if: i) all parties consent (and continue to do so: this consent should be recorded), and ii) the recording of the review meeting/oral examination can be continued in an appropriate format. If consent to continue as audio-only is not given and /or recording cannot be continued in an appropriate format, PGRA must be informed and the remainder of the second progress review meeting/oral examination must be rescheduled as soon as possible (within 48 hours unless permission is requested from SCA for a longer delay).

Failure of recording

- 1.11 If the second progress review meeting/oral examination is concluded and it is subsequently identified that no recording has been made (due to human or technical error):
- If the outcome of the progress review meeting/oral examination is positive (i.e. progress or pass/pass with corrections), PGRA must be informed but the outcome will stand.
 - If the outcome of the progress review meeting/oral examination is negative (i.e. withdrawal/transfer for a progress review meeting or revise and resubmit/downgrade/fail for an oral examination), PGRA must be informed and the PGR can be offered a choice - either the outcome can stand OR the outcome can be set aside, and the progress review meeting/oral examination rescheduled as soon as possible (within 48 hours unless permission is requested from SCA for a longer delay).
- 1.12 If the recording fails during a second progress review meeting/oral examination (ie there is a failure of the original and all backup means of recording), at a point where the examiners cannot reasonably conclude the progress review meeting/oral examination, PGRA must be informed and the remainder of the progress review meeting/oral examination must be rescheduled as soon as possible (within 48 hours unless permission is requested from SCA for a longer delay).
- 1.13 Any notes taken by the examiners during a second progress review meeting/oral examination where there are recording issues should be copied by the department and sent to PGRA where they will be kept for 12 months, or until the investigation of any appeal or complaint arising from the progress review meeting/oral examination is complete, whichever is later.

Recording the examination

- 1.14 The department is responsible for ensuring that a designated person is available before the start of the second progress review meeting/oral examination to assist the progression panel/examiners with recording equipment/technology. Before the second progress review meeting/oral examination, the designated person should ensure that the PGR's name and student number and the date of the second progress review meeting/oral examination is appropriately linked to the recording.

- 1.15 The chair of the progression panel/internal examiner (or, in cases where there are two external examiners and no internal examiner, the independent chair) will inform those present at the start of the second progress review meeting/oral examination that the recording is starting and at the end of the second progress review meeting/oral examination that it is being stopped. The recording should end when the second progress review meeting/oral examination is complete, and the PGR leaves the room prior to the private discussion of the progression panel/examiners. Neither the private discussion of the progression panel/examiners, nor any subsequent discussion between the PGR and the progression panel/examiners, should be recorded.
- 1.16 After the second progress review meeting/oral examination, the recording should be sent to PGRA for secure storage. No copy of the recording should be made, nor should it be listened to in the department.

Storage of recordings

- 1.17 The recording will be stored centrally and securely by the PGRA. It will be erased one year after the final result of the progression attempt/final examination has been confirmed by the SCA, or, if an appeal or complaint is received, after consideration within the University and, if applicable, subsequent consideration by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE).

Status of the recordings

- 1.18 The recording has the status of examination script and is therefore exempt from subject access requests under the General Data Protection Regulation (the Regulation does not restrict the media that can constitute an examination script). However, this exemption does not extend to the progression panel/examiners' comments on the PGR's performance, or any other form of feedback or conversation beyond the requirements of the second progress review meeting/oral examination. Provided these are not recorded, the recordings are exempt from data requests by the PGR. The recording cannot be released to a third party under the Freedom of Information Act because it holds the PGR's personal data, the wider disclosure of which is likely to be unfair and contrary to the purposes for which the data were obtained (see above).

Use of the recording in the event of appeal

- 1.19 Grounds for appeal:
- a) PGRs may not appeal against the academic judgement of progression panel/examiners;
 - b) PGRs may appeal against a decision reached as a consequence of assessment if they believe that a procedural irregularity has occurred, or that the assessment was conducted unfairly or improperly; or if, for good reason, relevant exceptional circumstances can be shown which could not reasonably have been brought to the attention of the progression panel/examiners before a decision on the PGR's academic performance was reached.

Procedure for consideration of appeals:

- a) In considering an appeal Special Cases (SC) may request information from the academic department concerned or other relevant parties concerning any matter raised by the appellant. The recording may form part of the evidence considered. The recording will not be released to the PGR or any other party as a means to preparing an appeal;
- b) SC may ask the Graduate School Board concerned if, in the light of the evidence presented by the appellant, it is prepared to reconsider its recommendation or decision and the Board may agree to do so. The appellant will retain the right to appeal against a subsequent recommendation or decision;
- c) SC will give reasons for any decision that an appeal should not be heard;
- d) If SC decides, wholly or partly on the evidence of the recording, that the appeal should be heard, a copy of the recording or, at SC's discretion, of relevant parts, shall be made available to the

members of the panel, the appellant and the other participants in the case review.

Exceptional use of an independent observer in place of an recording

- 1.20 The circumstances in which permission may be sought to employ an independent observer in place of a recording are if recording would present a PGR with difficulties on medical or psychological grounds. In these circumstances, the Graduate Chair must seek permission from the SCA for an independent observer to attend the second progress review meeting/oral examination, supplying appropriate documentation from a medical practitioner or counsellor. The Graduate Chair shall nominate the proposed observer (on the form for the appointment of examiners in the case of an oral examination).
- 1.21 The independent observer should be an academic member of University staff in the PGR's discipline or related area (not including the PGR's supervisor(s)), but need not be an expert on the subject of the thesis. The observer will submit a brief report to the SCA on the conduct of the second progress review meeting/oral examination, noting the main subjects discussed and any areas of concern voiced by the progression panel/examiners. They must be prepared to provide an independent viewpoint on the second progress review meeting/oral examination should there be an appeal or complaint based on its conduct. In the event of an appeal or complaint, the observer's report will be made available to SC (appeals) or the Complaints Team (complaint) and will be shared with relevant parties (including the appellant/complainant). The observer should not intervene during the second progress review meeting/oral examination unless an exceptional situation should arise.
- 1.22 It is essential that these arrangements are made well in advance of the second progress review meeting/oral examination and conveyed to the PGR and progression panel/examiners.

Appendix 2: Policy on PhD/EngD and MPhil PGR Progression

Where there is any inconsistency between the PoRD and this Policy in relation to formal reviews of progress, this Policy applies.

Formal reviews of progress: purpose

- 1.1 A PGR is admitted to a PhD, EngD or MPhil programme on the basis of an assessment of their potential at the admissions stage. Remaining on the PhD, EngD or MPhil programme is conditional on the PGR making satisfactory progress with respect to their research project and the other elements of their programme.
- 1.2 The purpose of formal reviews of progress is to ensure that PGRs on PhD, EngD and MPhil programmes are making satisfactory progress. A formal review of progress should give a PhD, EngD or MPhil PGR a clear sense of the progress they are making, providing reassurance for those who are performing to or beyond expectations and providing a means by which those who are underperforming can be identified in a timely manner and given the advice and support they need to address the situation.
- 1.3 The University's approach to progression (which is aligned with national expectations and sector norms), aims to ensure that PGRs are treated fairly and equitably, whilst respecting disciplinary differences.

Formal reviews of progress: key elements

- 1.4 Formal reviews of progress take place on an annual basis for full-time PhD, EngD and MPhil PGRs (towards the end of a PGR's academic year) and on a biennial basis for part-time PhD and MPhil PGRs.
- 1.5 Formal reviews of progress are not required for entry into a continuation period, where this is permitted. This means that a PGR on a three-year PhD programme (and part-time equivalent) will have two formal reviews of progress, a PGR on a four-year PhD or EngD programme (and part-time equivalent) will have three formal reviews of progress, and a PGR on an MPhil programme will have a single formal review of progress.
- 1.6 In a formal review of progress, a PhD, EngD or MPhil PGR is assessed against the relevant University progression criteria by a progression panel. The progression panel is independent of the PGR's supervisor(s) to gain an external perspective on the progress that a PGR is making, and to ensure that the supervisor's relationship with the PGR is developmental, rather than judgemental.
- 1.7 PGRs are permitted a maximum of two opportunities to meet the relevant University progression criteria at each formal review of progress. If a PGR has not met the relevant University progression criteria after two attempts they will be deemed to have failed the progression point and they will be transferred to an alternative programme or their enrolment will be terminated.
- 1.8 Whilst the framework for formal reviews of progress is set out by the University, many of the details (including the exact timing, the evidence requested, and the composition and operation of panels) are determined departmentally within the parameters set by the University. A department must obtain PPPC approval for its approach to formal reviews of progress (i.e. including in relation to the timing, evidence and panels) and any major changes to that approach.

Overview of the process

- 1.9 The timing of formal reviews of progress is determined by departments, within parameters set by the

University.

- 1.10 Departments determine (subject to PPPC approval) what evidence (written and oral) PhD, EngD and MPhil PGRs should provide to demonstrate that they have met the relevant University progression criteria. Evidence from the PGR is considered alongside the supervisor's report on the PGR's progress and, where required by a department, agreed TAP reports.
- 1.11 The progression panel will consider the evidence from the PGR and the supervisor's report (and the agreed TAP reports if applicable) at a progress review meeting. Based on these elements, the progression panel will make a decision as to whether the PGR has met, exceeded or not met the relevant University progression criteria and also make a recommendation regarding PGR progression. Note that departments are not required to use the 'exceeded' category if they do not wish to.
- 1.12 If the progression panel decides that the PGR has met or exceeded the relevant University progression criteria, it should recommend:
- (i) that the PGR be progressed;
- if, however, the progression panel decides that the PGR has *not yet* met the relevant University progression criteria, it may recommend:
- (ii) that the PGR be given a second opportunity to meet the relevant University progression criteria); *or*
- (iii) that the PGR be invited to transfer to an MPhil programme (for PGRs enrolled on a PhD programme only); *or*
- (iv) that the PGR be invited to transfer to a MA/MSc (by research) programme; *or*
- (v) that the PGR be invited to withdraw from the University.
- 1.13 Recommendations from progression panels are considered by the relevant departmental Graduate School Board (GSB). The role of the GSB is to oversee the process within the department, ensuring that formal reviews of progress have been carried out in accordance with University and departmental policy and identifying and resolving any issues arising from the process. In addition, the GSB is responsible for ensuring that consistent standards are being applied across progression panels (see below). The GSB is not expected to question the academic judgement of a progression panel.
- 1.14 Progression decisions (i.e. for progression or, after a second attempt at meeting the relevant University progression criteria, for programme transfer or withdrawal) are approved by the SCA, on behalf of Senate. The SCA will not question the academic judgement of a progression panel. SCA has delegated its authority with respect to the approval of progression decisions to the PGRA (which manages this process in SkillsForge) but PGRA will refer any difficult cases to SCA.
- 1.15 PGRs are reminded that the decision of a progression panel does not serve as a prediction for the outcome of the final examination.

University progression criteria

- 1.16 The University's progression criteria for PhD, EngD and MPhil programmes set out the *threshold* requirements for progression to the next stage. They should be understood by reference to what a conscientious PGR might reasonably expect to have achieved in the time available.

Progression criteria for a first formal review of progress

- 1.17 For progression into year 2 of a full-time PhD/EngD or MPhil programme (or equivalent stage of a

part-time PhD or MPhil programme), a PGR must demonstrate that they:

- can articulate the direction their research is taking and the research questions it addresses;
- have planned in a realistic fashion the second year (or equivalent) of their research, indicating any risks and how these will be mitigated;
- have sufficient acquaintance with the relevant field of knowledge to place their research into context;
- have sufficient proficiency in the relevant research methods, techniques and theoretical approaches to move their research to the next stage;
- have undertaken all required training (including successful completion of the Research Integrity Tutorial);
- have considered ethical issues (including data management and authorship) where applicable and have in place an appropriate data management plan.

Progression criteria for a second formal review of progress

1.18 For progression into year 3 of a full-time PhD/EngD programme (or equivalent stage of a part-time PhD programme), a PGR must demonstrate that they:

- can articulate the direction their research is taking and the research questions it addresses and how this will lead to a substantial original contribution to knowledge or understanding;
- have planned in a realistic fashion the third year (or equivalent) of their research, based on the expectation that the project will be completed and the thesis submitted on time, indicating any risks and how these will be mitigated;
- have the ability to write up their research in an appropriate academic format for it to be critically assessed by peer reviewers and examiners;
- have begun to acquire the wider background knowledge of their research field required for the degree of PhD;
- can apply the relevant research methods, techniques and theoretical approaches required to make an original contribution to knowledge or understanding;
- have undertaken all required training;
- have considered ethical issues (including data management and authorship) where applicable and have in place an appropriate data management plan.

Progression criteria for a third formal review of progress

1.19 For progression into year 4 of a full-time four-year PhD/EngD programme (or equivalent stage of a part-time four-year PhD programme), a PGR must demonstrate that they:

- have planned in a realistic fashion the final year (or equivalent) of their research, based on the expectation that the project will be completed and the thesis submitted on time, indicating any risks and how these will be mitigated;
- have started to write up their research in an appropriate academic format for it to be critically assessed by peer reviewers and examiners;
- have acquired much of the wider background knowledge of their research field required for the degree of PhD;
- can apply the relevant research methods, techniques and theoretical approaches required to make an original contribution to knowledge or understanding;
- have undertaken all required training;
- have considered ethical issues (including data management and authorship) where applicable and have in place an appropriate data management plan.

Progression panels

- 1.20 The progression panel for a PhD, EngD or MPhil PGR should comprise at least two individuals and be independent of the PGR's supervisor(s). The progression panel should be chaired by a senior academic member of the same or cognate department who has experience of successful PGR supervision in the broad disciplinary area within which the PGR is based. The chair and membership of the progression panel should be approved by the relevant departmental GSB. A member of a progression panel may serve as an internal examiner subject to certain conditions.
- 1.21 Progression panels are not expected to make detailed judgements about a PGR's research project, nor to direct the PGR's future work, rather they are required to determine, on the basis of the evidence from the PGR and the supervisor's report, if the PGR meets the relevant University criteria for progression (which are threshold requirements).
- 1.22 The PGR should be informed of the membership of their progression panel at the start of the academic year, but with the understanding that, in some circumstances, it may become necessary to change the panel membership.

Alternative models for progression panels

- 1.23 Some departments may choose to convene progression panels for each PGR on an individual basis. In this case, the non-supervisory member(s) of the PGR's TAP will often be part of the progression panel. This approach has the advantage of allowing the progression panel to be tailored to the PGR's research project but the department must have a means of ensuring consistent decision making (e.g. by the Graduate Chair and/or Deputy Graduate Chair being a member of all the progression panels, or the Chair and/or Deputy reviewing the recommendations of individual progression panels).
- 1.24 Other departments may choose instead to convene a small number of progression panels, each with a pool of suitably qualified individuals (to enable supervisors to stand aside when their own PGR is under consideration), to deal with all the progress review meetings for a cohort of PGRs. This approach has the advantage of helping to improve efficiency and consistency of decision-making.

Timing of the review process

- 1.25 Formal reviews of progress take place within the University timeframe (this refers to submission of progression panel recommendations in SkillsForge) as follows:

Maximum period of enrolment prior to progression reviews

Which progression point?	FT PGR First Attempt Timing	FT PGR Second Attempt Timing	PT PGR First Attempt Timing	PT PGR Second Attempt Timing
PhD/EngD and MPhil First Formal Review of Progress	9-12 months	No more than 3 months after the date of the first progress review meeting	17-24 months	No more than 6 months after the date of the first progress review meeting
PhD/EngD Second Formal Review of Progress	21-24 months	No more than 3 months after the date of the first progress review meeting	41-48 months	No more than 6 months after the date of the first progress review meeting
4 Year	33-36 months	No more than 3	65-72 months	No more than 6

PhD/EngD Third Formal Review of Progress		months after the date of the first progress review meeting		months after the date of the first progress review meeting
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- 1.26 Working within the University timeframe, a department must specify for their standard cohort entry point (i.e. September) and any additional cohort entry points (e.g. January) and for each progression point:
- key dates (including the submission date for written evidence (a single date for each cohort), and the timing of presentations, if applicable);
 - a six-week window within which progress review meetings will be held;
 - key dates applicable to PGRs making a second attempt.
- 1.27 Where a PGR commences a PhD, EngD or MPhil programme outside a cohort entry point or when a PGR's journey goes out of sync with the rest of their cohort (e.g. due to a leave of absence) the dates specified above will need to be calculated for that individual.

Guidance for PGRs

- 1.28 Every department should provide its PhD/EngD and MPhil PGRs with a comprehensive briefing on the department's requirements for formal reviews of progress as part of induction and, ideally, also at a later date e.g. after their first TAP meeting, in addition to this information being included in the department's PGR handbook. Information should include the composition of the progression panel, the evidence requirements, and key dates.

Evidence from the PGR

- 1.29 Departments are responsible for specifying, for each formal review of progress, how PhD, EngD and MPhil PGRs should demonstrate to the progression panel that they have met the relevant University progression criteria. This approach enables disciplinary differences within and between departments to be catered for. A department's requirements in terms of the evidence that its PGRs should provide must, however, be carefully calibrated against the University progression criteria and, for this reason, are subject to University approval.
- 1.30 The department's requirements in terms of the oral and/or written evidence that its PGRs must provide should be clearly communicated to PGRs in the department's PGR handbook and as part of the departmental induction process. The requirements should be presented alongside any formal requirements for TAP meetings so that all the key milestones for a PGR's programme are available in a single location. When some variation in evidence requirements is permitted within a *single* named PhD/EngD/MPhil programme, the department must have a robust process for ensuring that there is clarity for individual PGRs.
- 1.31 A department's requirements in terms of the evidence that its PGRs must provide should include:
- **written evidence**, for example:
 - (some of the following) a progress report, research plans, a bibliography, a literature review, preliminary results, draft chapters or parts thereof, and draft or published academic papers
 - details of training completed and ethical approval obtained

and will often include (see below):

- **oral evidence**, for example from:
 - discussion between the PGR and their progression panel at the progress review meeting
 - a presentation from the PGR followed by a question and answer session.

Notes on evidence from PGRs

- 1.32 Written evidence of substantive length must contribute directly to the thesis (e.g. an introductory or substantive chapter) or an academic paper or similar: this is to ensure that production of the written submission does not distract from the research project itself.
- 1.33 Oral evidence from discussion between the PGR and their progression panel at the progress review meeting is recommended as an effective and efficient means for a progression panel to determine if a PGR has met the relevant University progression criteria and because it provides the PGR with a valuable opportunity to practise explaining and justifying their work to informed academics (as required for the final oral examination).
- 1.34 Oral evidence from a presentation from the PGR followed by a question and answer session may form part of the progress review meeting. Alternatively, a presentation may take place in advance of the progress review meeting, as long as all members of the progression panel are present. If the presentation is separate from the progress review meeting, it may be open to the wider department, including the supervisor.
- 1.35 Where a department expects PGRs to audit or pass taught modules (e.g. research methods) or other courses, this should be built into the evidence requirements. With respect to taught modules, departments should specify how many credits and at what level, the pass mark required (and whether for individual modules or an average) and reassessment opportunities.

Variation in departmental evidence requirements

- 1.36 Where departments have four-year PhD/EngD programmes and/or specific DTP/CDT PhD programmes it is expected that these programmes will have different evidence requirements from the standard three-year PhD programmes because of the increased focus on taught elements, particularly in the first year.
- 1.37 Within a single named PhD/EngD/MPhil programme, a department may also permit some variation in evidence to accommodate different styles of research project. For example, a social science department might permit some variation in evidence requirements within their standard three-year PhD programme to cater for research projects with a scientific focus vis-à-vis those with a humanities focus, and a science department might permit some variation in evidence requirements within their standard three-year PhD programme to cater for research projects based on field work vis-à-vis those based on laboratory work or to cater for research projects using existing scientific apparatus vis-à-vis those which involve building scientific apparatus.

Supervisor's report

- 1.38 Prior to a progress review meeting, the PGR's supervisor will be asked to give their opinion (on a standard University pro forma) as to whether the PhD, EngD or MPhil PGR meets the relevant University progression criteria. This will be shared with the PGR, who will be asked if they agree or disagree with their supervisor's report. Where there is more than one supervisor, all supervisors should contribute to a single report. The supervisor(s) should have access to their PGR's written evidence prior to writing the report, and the supervisor may also have to be present at their PGR's presentation (if applicable) unless this forms part of the progress review meeting.

Progress review meetings

- 1.39 At a progress review meeting, a progression panel considers the evidence from the PhD, EngD or MPhil PGR (see above), alongside the supervisor's report and, where required by a department, agreed TAP reports. Based on these elements, the progression panel will make a decision as to whether the PGR has met, exceeded or not met the relevant University progression criteria, and also make a recommendation regarding PGR progression.
- 1.40 Progress review meetings are held in person to facilitate full discussion of a PGR's case. If, for good reason, a member of the progression panel has to participate remotely this should be by means of video-conferencing and this should be indicated on the progression panel decision/recommendation form. A supervisor may only attend a progress review meeting as an observer if their presence is requested by the PGR. Online progress review meetings should be avoided as per the guidance for online oral examinations (section 12 of the PoRD).

PGR attendance at progress review meetings

- 1.41 If a department's evidence requirements include oral evidence obtained at the progress review meeting, then a PGR will, as a matter of course, be present at their progress review meeting. This ensures that a PGR has every opportunity to demonstrate to their progression panel that they have met the relevant University progression criteria and it enables the panel to address, with the PGR, any issues arising from their supervisor's report and/or agreed TAP reports (where required by the department). Where a PGR's presence in a progress review meeting is required, the PGR may be present throughout the meeting, or the panel may have private deliberations before and/or after their discussion with the PGR. If, for good reason, a PGR needs to participate remotely in a progress review meeting, permission must be sought in advance from PGRA (decision taken by the Student Administration Manager (PGRA) or their designated alternate).
- 1.42 If a department's evidence requirements (see above) do *not* include oral evidence obtained at the progress review meeting, then a PGR will not, as a matter of course, be present at their progress review meeting. **If, however, a progression panel does not feel able, on the basis of the evidence provided by a PGR and/or the supervisor's report and/or the agreed TAP reports (if applicable), to recommend that an individual PGR be progressed, then a progress review meeting at which the PGR in question *is present*, along with at least two members of the progression panel (normally including the Chair), must be scheduled as soon as possible (and within department's specified window for progress review meetings). The purpose of requiring the progression panel (or part thereof) to meet with the PGR in this instance is to give the PGR (who is at risk of not progressing at the first attempt) every opportunity to demonstrate that they have met the relevant University progression criteria.** If, for good reason, a PGR needs to participate remotely in such a meeting, permission must be sought in advance from PGRA (decision taken by the Student Administration Manager (PGRA) or their designated alternate).

Full or partial integration of TAP and progression meetings

- 1.43 Where a department requires its PGRs to be present at their progress review meetings as a matter of course (as above, i.e. the department's evidence requirements include oral evidence obtained at the progress review meeting), the second TAP meeting of each year (full-time PGRs) may be fully integrated within the review meeting (i.e. in addition to making a formal decision about the PGR's progress, the progress review panel (in the absence of the supervisor) works with the PGR to deliver the developmental aspect of the TAP meeting and to complete the TAP form). In this scenario, it is recommended that the progress review element is completed prior to the TAP element.
- 1.44 Alternatively, some departments may wish to schedule progress review and TAP meetings

consecutively. It is recommended that the progress review meeting is scheduled first and the meeting reconvenes as a TAP meeting once the supervisor has joined.

Notification of progression decisions

- 1.45 Departments are responsible for notifying PGRs of the outcome of the first attempt at progression and for arranging the second attempt at progression where required.

Second attempt

- 1.46 If, at a PGR's first attempt a progression panel decides that a PGR on a PhD, EngD or MPhil programme has *not yet* met the relevant University progression criteria (including on the grounds of non-submission of evidence and/or non-attendance at a progress review meeting), it must recommend a second attempt at meeting the relevant University progression criteria, programme transfer or withdrawal (see above).
- 1.47 If a PGR has not met the relevant University progression criteria at the first attempt, in determining what recommendation to make, the progression panel should consider what would be in the best interests of the PGR concerned. If the PGR's performance at the first attempt is such that the progression panel thinks it is unlikely that the PGR will meet the progression criteria at the second attempt, or the panel believes that preparing for a second attempt would seriously compromise a PGR's likelihood of completion on time, then the progression panel should recommend programme transfer or withdrawal. To recommend programme transfer, the progression panel should agree that there is a realistic possibility of the PGR successfully completing the programme to which they would be transferred within a reasonable time period (taking into account the normal period of enrolment for the degree in question and the need for any extensions, if required, to be approved).
- 1.48 The progression panel will provide the PGR with clear written feedback about why the progression criteria were not met and its reasons for recommending a second attempt, programme transfer or withdrawal. The progression panel will specify, in broad terms, what the PGR would need to do to meet the relevant University progression criteria at the second attempt.
- 1.49 In the case of a recommendation for programme transfer or withdrawal, the PGR may choose to accept the recommendation or, alternatively, decide to make a second attempt at meeting the relevant University progression criteria against the advice of the progression panel. The PGR must inform their department of their intention (i.e. second attempt, transfer or withdrawal) within two weeks of being informed of the panel's recommendation (if a PGR does not respond within this timeframe it will be treated as an assumed withdrawal).
- 1.50 If the PGR accepts a recommendation for withdrawal this will be undertaken with immediate effect. If the PGR accepts a recommendation for transfer to an alternative programme, the PGR's enrolment will be transferred immediately, subject to the following considerations:

Where the PGR is being transferred from an MPhil/PhD/EngD to a MA/MSc (by research):

- if they have not yet exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MA/MSc (by research), they will have the remaining normal period of enrolment for that degree plus the standard three-month continuation period to submit their thesis
- if they have already exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MA/MSc (by research), they will have a three-month MA/MSc (by research) continuation period added from the date of transfer to give them time to reframe their research and submit for the lower award.

Where the PGR is being transferred from a PhD/EngD to an MPhil:

- if they have not yet exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MPhil, they will have the

remaining normal period of enrolment for that degree plus the standard 12-month continuation period to submit their thesis;

- if they have already exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MPhil, they will have a 12-month MPhil continuation period added from the date of transfer to give them time to reframe their research and submit for the lower award.

Making a second attempt at meeting the progression criteria

- 1.51 If a PGR has a second attempt at meeting the relevant University progression criteria they will continue on their programme pending a decision regarding the second attempt.
- 1.52 Where a PGR makes a second attempt at meeting the relevant University progression criteria, the final recommendation from the progression panel must be submitted via SkillsForge by the deadline specified above (i.e. for full-time PGRs no later than three months after the date of the first attempt at progression, calculated from the date of the first progress review meeting). The department must ensure that the timetable for making a second attempt (including provision for a second and final review meeting, if required) enables this deadline to be met.
- 1.53 The relevant departmental GSB will supply the PGR with the date by which they must present new and/or revised written evidence (see above). The progression panel will also state whether the supervisor(s) will be required to submit a new supervisor's report in the light of the new and/or revised written submission from the PGR.
- 1.54 The PGR will need to work with the supervisor(s) to draw up an action plan and identify any support needs to cover the period leading up to the second attempt. The PGR is, however, ultimately responsible for ensuring that they address the points raised by the progression panel at the first attempt.
- 1.55 If the new and/or revised written evidence presented by the PGR - plus the new supervisor's report if required - is sufficient to satisfy the progression panel that the PGR has now met or exceeded the relevant University progression criteria, then a second progress review meeting is not required.
- 1.56 If the new and/or revised written evidence presented by the PGR - plus the new supervisor's report if required - is not sufficient to satisfy the progression panel that the PGR has met or exceeded the relevant University progression criteria, then a second and final progress review meeting is required in which the progression panel (or at least two members of the panel, normally including the Chair) must meet with the PGR, normally face-to-face. If, for good reason, a PGR needs to participate remotely, permission must be sought in advance from PGRA (decision taken by the Student Administration Manager (PGRA) or their designated alternate). Each department is responsible for ensuring that a recording is made of all second progress review meetings, in accordance with the University's Policy on the recording of second progress review meetings and oral examinations for research degrees (Appendix 1)..
- 1.57 If – based on the new and/or revised evidence, the new supervisor's report (if applicable) and discussion with the PGR in a second progress review meeting (if applicable) – the progression panel decides that the PGR has met or exceeded the relevant University progression criteria at the second attempt, it should recommend:
- (i) that the PGR be progressed;

if, however, the progression panel decides that the PGR has *not* met the relevant University progression criteria at the second attempt (including on the grounds of the non-submission of evidence and/or non-attendance at a progress review meeting), the PGR will be deemed to have failed the progression point and the progression panel must recommend:

- (ii) that the PGR be transferred to an MPhil programme (for PGRs enrolled on a PhD programme only); *or*
- (iii) that the PGR be transferred to a MA/MSc (by research) programme; *or*
- (iv) that the PGR's enrolment with the University be terminated.

The progression panel should provide reasons for its choice of (ii)-(iv).

- 1.58 If a PGR progresses as a consequence of meeting or exceeding the University's progression criteria at the second attempt this does not alter the timing of the next formal review of progression (if applicable), nor change the period of enrolment, nor alter the deadline for submission of the thesis.
- 1.59 If a PGR has not met the relevant University progression criteria at the second attempt, in determining whether to make a recommendation for transfer or termination, the progression panel should consider what would be in the best interests of the PGR concerned. To recommend transfer, the progression panel should agree that there is a realistic possibility of the PGR completing the programme to which they would be transferred within a reasonable period (taking into account the normal period of enrolment for the degree in question).
- 1.60 If the SCA approves a recommendation for termination of enrolment, the PGR's enrolment will be terminated immediately. If the SCA approves a recommendation for transfer, the PGR's enrolment will be transferred immediately, subject to the following considerations:

Where the PGR is being transferred from an MPhil/PhD/EngD to a MA/MSc (by research):

- if they have not yet exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MA/MSc (by research), they will have the remaining normal period of enrolment for that degree plus the standard three-month continuation period to submit their thesis;
- if they have already exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MA/MSc (by research), they will have a three-month MA/MSc (by research) continuation period added from the date of transfer to give them time to reframe their research and submit for the lower award.

Where the PGR is being transferred from a PhD/EngD to an MPhil:

- if they have not yet exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MPhil, they will have the remaining normal period of enrolment for that degree plus the standard 12-month continuation period to submit their thesis;
- if they have already exceeded the normal period of enrolment for the MPhil, they will have a 12-month MPhil continuation period added from the date of transfer to give them time to reframe their research and submit for the lower award.

- 1.61 A PGR retains the right of appeal against a failure to progress if they can establish grounds for doing so, as outlined in University Regulation 2.8.

Entry into a continuation period

- 1.62 There is no formal review of progress for PGRs entering into a continuation period, where this is permitted, because the expectation is that these PGRs should be near to submitting their theses.
- 1.63 Departments are, however, asked to ensure that PGRs who wish to enter a continuation period are asked to provide evidence to their TAP, in a form specified by their department, that they have started to write up their research in an appropriate academic format for it to be critically assessed by peer reviewers and examiners, and have planned in a realistic fashion how the thesis will be completed to the required standard within the specified time limit.
- 1.64 This evidence should be scrutinised at the final TAP prior to the PGR entering the continuation period.

Where the TAP has concerns about the evidence presented, the PGR should be advised to seek additional advice and support from their supervisor(s) and the GSB alerted so that they can monitor the situation.

Exceptional circumstances, including extension of progression deadlines

- 1.65 If a PhD or MPhil PGR does not produce the evidence required by their department for a formal review of progress (including non-attendance at a progression-related meeting, if applicable) and there are no exceptional circumstances then the PGR's progress review panel will deem the PGR not to have met the relevant progression criteria and should normally recommend that the PGR be withdrawn (first attempt at progression) or their enrolment terminated (second attempt at progression), with the option for the department or PGR to make a case to PGR Special Cases for transfer to a lower award.
- 1.66 A department may grant an extension to a PGR for an internal (ie departmental) deadline for a formal review of progress (eg relating to the date for submission of written evidence or the timing of the progress review meetings) if the PGR has exceptional circumstance as long as the University deadlines relating to formal reviews of progress (as set out above) can still be met.
- 1.67 A department may seek an extension to a University deadline for a formal review of progress (see above) only in the case of exceptional circumstances relating to an individual PGR (namely where a PGR's ability to complete the formal review of progress has been hampered by documented medical or personal reasons or, more rarely, extraordinary and unexpected academic circumstances which can be addressed without affecting the ability of the PGR to submit their thesis on time). The magnitude of the research task, or failure on the part of the PGR to perceive or act on the magnitude of the research task, is not a reason for an extension.
- 1.68 A request for an extension to a University deadline for a formal review of progress due to exceptional circumstances relating to staff involved in the process (e.g. the absence of the supervisor) will not normally be considered as departments should make alternative arrangements in such circumstances so as not to disadvantage the PGRs concerned.
- 1.69 A request for an extension to a University deadline for a formal review of progress will not be considered until the PGR in question is within two months of the deadline. An extension will normally be limited to two months and the total period of extension that may normally be approved will be four months.
- 1.70 Requests for extensions to University progression deadlines (or any other variation to the progression process related due to exceptional circumstances) should be submitted to PGRA. Requests will be considered by PGR Special Cases.
- 1.71 Any extension to the deadline for a formal review of progress will not alter the timing of the next formal review of progress (if applicable), nor change the period of enrolment, nor alter the date for submission of the thesis.
- 1.72 Departments should use the formal reviews of progress as an opportunity to assess whether a PGR might benefit from a leave of absence to deal with exceptional circumstances, or a transfer of programme, or a change in the mode of study (e.g. from full-time to part-time) in line with the PoRD.

Appendix 3: PGR Academic Misconduct Policy

1. Scope

- 1.1. PGRs are expected to maintain a high standard of academic and research integrity at all times. Allegations of academic and research misconduct by PGRs can arise in various ways, and are dealt with by different policies.
- 1.2. **This policy applies to allegations of academic misconduct by a PGR in any formal assessment in their programme**, including, but not limited to, formal reviews of progress, the thesis and the oral examination (but excluding academic misconduct in credit-bearing taught modules). No decision about the PGR's progression or the outcome of the examination may be made until the investigation has been concluded.
- 1.3. PGR programmes contain many elements that are mandated or expected but not formally assessed (for example, preparing work for supervisory and TAP meetings, participating in group activities (e.g. critiquing other PGRs' work), developing a PDP, and presenting posters or papers at department seminars or conferences). Allegations of academic misconduct in such activities (assuming that they are not considered research misconduct) may be investigated under this policy and dealt with as probationary offences (i.e. via informal warning and training).
- 1.4. Allegations of misconduct by a PGR in credit-bearing taught modules that form part of their PGR programme will be dealt with according to the Academic Misconduct Policy, with a report being made to the Progression Panel (where applicable). Note that disciplinary academic misconduct offences in a taught component are dealt with under Regulation 7: Student Discipline via the Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Procedure.
- 1.5. Allegations of research misconduct by a PGR, (including, but not limited to, ethics approvals, data management and dissemination), even if identified in a formal assessment and whether or not it is published or otherwise disseminated, will be dealt with according to the [Policy for the Investigation of an Allegation of Research Misconduct](#). Where there is doubt as to whether the PGR Assessment Misconduct Policy or the Policy for the Investigation of an Allegation of Research Misconduct should apply, the latter policy takes precedence. Serious research misconduct can result in the termination of the PGR's enrolment at the University. Where a member of staff is also a PGR and their employment is research related, the staffing elements of the Research Misconduct policy take precedence. Where research misconduct is alleged during the assessment process but is investigated under the Policy for the Investigation of an Allegation of Research Misconduct, then no decision about the PGR's progression or the outcome of the examination may be made until the investigation has been concluded.
- 1.6. Allegations of misconduct regarding a PGR aiding or abetting a student at the University of York or elsewhere to commit academic misconduct are dealt with under Regulation 7: Student Discipline via the Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Procedure.
- 1.7. Allegations of academic misconduct by a York PGR committed at a partner institution or organisation (e.g. in a cross-institutional consortium or when enrolled on a joint or double PhD) should normally be investigated under this policy. The outcomes may be shared with the partner where appropriate.

2. The forms of assessment misconduct dealt with by this policy

- 2.1. The University is committed to developing high standards of academic practice among its staff and PGRs, and to safeguarding the standards of its academic awards to individuals. The University regards any form of academic misconduct as an extremely serious matter.
- 2.2. In order to be confident about the standards of academic awards it is essential that work submitted for assessment is a fair reflection of the abilities of the PGR having used legitimate resources and forms of support in the production of that work. The definitions listed below seek to make the boundaries between authorised and unauthorised support clear and include the inappropriate use of generative AI.
 - **Plagiarism** – the presentation of ideas, material, or scholarship sourced from the work of another individual or group available in a public or private source without sufficient acknowledgement via appropriate referencing and citation.
 - **Cheating** – failure to comply with the rules of a closed/oral examination e.g. unauthorised access to materials or support in a closed/oral examination, or personation.
 - **False Authorship** - the production or adaptation of academic work (for example writing, computer code, images, data), in whole or part, whether or not a payment or other favour is involved, using unapproved, undeclared or falsely declared human (eg family members, friends, essay mills or other PGRs/students not taking the same assessment) or technological assistance (eg generative AI or software).
 - **Fabrication** – incorporating falsified or fabricated material or data in academic work.
 - **Unacknowledged resubmission** – the submission of work that has already been submitted, in whole or in part, for the award of a degree or other qualification at this or any other university without proper acknowledgement of the work and any award which was granted for it.

3. General principles

Standard of proof

- 3.1. It is sufficient to establish cases of academic misconduct ‘on the balance of probabilities’, rather than ‘beyond all reasonable doubt’. This means that the panel needs only believe that it is likely that misconduct occurred, rather than the process requiring that the evidence be indisputable that misconduct has occurred. Decisions must be supported by a rationale and, importantly, evidence which are both clearly explained to the PGR. The burden lies on the University to show, on the balance of probabilities, that the acts constituting the alleged academic misconduct occurred.
- 3.2. In the case of mitigation of penalties (section 5) the burden of proof will be on PGRs to prove their judgement was affected if they wish this to be taken into account in consideration of the appropriate penalty.

Responsibility of the PGR

- 3.3. The PGR shall be considered responsible for the academic integrity of all work they submit for assessment. If insufficiently acknowledged material is discovered by examiners, the question of whether the PGR has behaved (or intended to behave) dishonestly or unethically must not be a factor in the decision to report the case to the relevant assessment officer or not. Expressions of guilt, remorse or lack of intent are neither to be accepted as justifications for any alleged misconduct nor taken into consideration when determining the penalty where such misconduct is established.

Sufficient acknowledgement of sources

- 3.4. The aim in all assessed work should be for the PGR to make the clear distinction between their own ideas and those drawn from other sources. The University expects all scholars to be able to paraphrase source material with appropriate citations, include page references in the citations appropriately where material is quoted directly, present secondary citations in a way that makes clear the extent of their own scholarship, present data accurately, produce an accurate reference list and consistently follow the referencing system mandated by their department(s), or editors of journals and/or commissioners of other academic outputs.
- 3.5. Where an examiner (or other assessor) is concerned about possible plagiarism in a thesis (or other document submitted for assessment), they may require that the thesis (or other document) is submitted to text-matching software (such as Turnitin). In the case of the final examination, this task should be undertaken by the internal examiner and the report shared with the external examiner.
- 3.6. The extent to which PGRs deviate from this expectation should be reflected in the panel's judgement about the work.

Improving of assessed work by third parties prior to submission

- 3.7. The aim of assessment is to establish the level of understanding, skills and performance of the individual PGR enrolled on the programme rather than measuring the extent of the PGR's academic, social or familial networks' level of understanding, skills and performance. While third parties may comment and offer feedback on draft material, they should not make changes on the PGR's behalf to work which is to be submitted for assessment, other than standard proofreading.
- 3.8. Proofreading should only be done in accordance with [Policy on Transparency of Authorship in PGR Programmes, including generative AI, proofreading and translation](#). PGRs are responsible for ensuring that this Policy is adhered to at all times.
- 3.9. Support given in acknowledgement of a specific disability and agreed by the relevant Graduate School Board, are not considered to be inappropriate support.
- 3.10. The following forms of improvement to work submitted for formal assessment by any third-party, undertaken on the PGR's behalf (rather than offered as comments or feedback by a supervisor or other researcher in the field) will be considered as a false authorship offence under this policy (see above).
 - adding or re-writing any of the PGR's sentences or sections of work
 - rearranging passages of text, sequences of code or sections of other material for the PGR
 - reformatting the material for the PGR
 - contributing additional material to the original
 - checking calculations or formulae
 - rewriting formulae, equations or computer code
 - re-labelling figures or diagrams.

Academic judgement in relation to PGR assessment misconduct

- 3.11. For PGRs, the consideration of any alleged academic misconduct takes place prior to the examination process for that assessment (see Section 4). A PGR Academic Misconduct Investigatory Panel (AMIP) considers the evidence and comes to a conclusion about the nature and extent of the misconduct and makes a decision on the resulting penalty. If it is deemed

appropriate to continue to the examination stage, then the AMIP will make a report on its findings to the examiners, if misconduct was identified.

- 3.12. Some aspects of this process will involve “academic judgement” which is defined as “a judgement that is made about a matter where the opinion of an academic expert is essential” ([OIAHE glossary](#), 2019). Decisions made solely on the basis of academic judgement are not open to appeal (Regulation 2.8.1(b)). In considering academic misconduct cases, the AMIP members are chosen so that there is academic expertise to make decisions that may involve academic judgement.

Decisions that involve academic judgement

- 3.13. When the AMIP scrutinises assessed work as part of an academic misconduct investigation, they will seek to evaluate the evidence for misconduct in that piece of work and determine, on the balance of probabilities, whether an offence has been committed and the nature of that offence. They will also determine the extent of the academic misconduct - e.g. the extent to which the PGR misrepresented the work as their own. These decisions involve the exercise of academic judgement.

Decisions that do not normally require academic judgement

- 3.14. Once the panel have determined the nature and extent of the academic misconduct under step 1, they should apply the corresponding penalty set out on the penalty table in Section 5 of this policy, as modified where necessary for any mitigating factors as set out in Section 5. Once the level of misconduct has been established, the corresponding penalty that should be applied and any mitigation to be considered, would not normally involve academic judgement. Establishing matters of fact, based on evidence, (e.g. establishing whether or not there has been a breach of assessment rules) do not normally involve academic judgement.

Exceptional Circumstances

- 3.15. Where academic misconduct is alleged or suspected, a PGR may not use exceptional circumstances – as defined by the University’s Exceptional Circumstances Affecting Assessment Policy – as a defence. The only exceptions are cases where, in the professional opinion of an appropriate professional, the PGR’s condition at the time of the offence was such that they were unable to differentiate between right and wrong in relation to their actions. Where the condition is longstanding, it can only be used as a defence where adjustments have not been made through no fault of the PGR. An investigation panel should not infer the inability to differentiate between right and wrong from a more general diagnosis of mental health issues; the professional evidence presented to the panel must specifically address this question in relation to the PGR’s psychological state at the time of the alleged offence.
- 3.16. For consideration of personal circumstances as a mitigation for the applied penalty, see Section 5.

Failure to detect academic misconduct in the past

- 3.17. Where academic misconduct is alleged or suspected, a PGR may not use as a defence the failure of any member of academic staff to detect academic misconduct at an earlier point in time in their studies.
- 3.18. When a suspicion is raised about a piece of work submitted for a given assessment, departments **may** examine work submitted for a previous assessment in order to gather

evidence relevant to the alleged misconduct they are investigating. However, the previous work cannot be referred for investigation under this policy. Departments may also review previous work under the Research Misconduct policy.

PGR Assessment Misconduct Investigation Panels (PGR AMIPs)

- 3.19. One of the overarching aims of the PGR Assessment Misconduct Policy is to ensure consistency of decision-making and judgements across academic departments and units in relation to the handling of academic misconduct cases. The PGR Assessment Misconduct Investigation Panels (PGR AMIPs) are the mechanism by which the University ensures that Assessment Misconduct procedures reflect the assessment principles of consistency, clarity, transparency and equity.
- 3.20. When a case of academic misconduct requires investigation by a PGR AMIP, the panel will be formed and will be chaired by the Dean of the YGRS or the relevant PGR Faculty Lead. The panel will comprise the Dean/PGR Faculty Lead, the Graduate Chair from the PGR's department and one other Graduate Chair from the same faculty. All members of the panel should be independent of the PGR; the supervisor, examiners or Thesis Advisory Panel members should not be on the panel. If anyone is disqualified from membership due to lack of independence from the PGR, then an alternate PGR Faculty Lead or Graduate Chair can be substituted.

4. The Assessment Misconduct procedures

These procedures should be followed for PGRs on all programmes.

4.1. *Initiating procedures*

Allegations of academic misconduct may be made by a PGR's supervisor, examiners or other assessors, or other individuals. Allegations of academic misconduct made anonymously may be considered if SCA concludes that there are sufficient grounds to believe that the allegation has merit and is not frivolous, vexatious or malicious. SCA may appoint one or more individuals (e.g. the programme leader, Graduate Chair) to provide investigatory support to those undertaking an initial review of an academic misconduct allegation. PGRA should be informed of any allegations of academic misconduct so that progression or examination proceedings can be paused whilst the allegation is investigated.

4.2. *Initiating procedures in respect of plagiarism:*

Where the examiner(s) or other assessors believe that the assessed work contains evidence of plagiarism (i.e. the insufficient acknowledgement of sources) they must come to a decision about whether this should be referred to a PGR AMIP, using the following as guidance:

- (a) Where there is the occasional referencing error (i.e. where the same minor error is not frequently repeated or a pattern of mistakes cannot be seen), the assessor notes this in the feedback and is specific about the error. Work matching this description need not be referred to a PGR AMIP. Where such errors occur in a thesis submitted for examination, they should be corrected before the final deposit.
- (b) Where there is evidence of more widespread or systematic misunderstanding, or of badly executed paraphrasing or acknowledgement of sources, or of another misconduct offence then the assessor(s) should report this together with evidence of the errors/misrepresentation that is causing concern. Details should be sent by the Graduate Chair to the SCA Secretary. The information provided must include the PGR's name, number, and programme of study, and the PGR's previous record in relation to academic misconduct. The assessors must provide a statement indicating the reasons

for their suspicion, and evidence of the suspicious nature of the assessment (potentially including a text-matching software report, or annotated copy of the work). This statement should indicate specific pages, paragraphs or phrases which are raising concern, rather than simply being an indication of duplicated text, and should include enough detail to allow the panel to investigate without specialist knowledge of the specific research topic. The SCA Secretary will inform the Dean of the YGRS, and will convene a panel as above. The PGR AMIP will normally be assigned within 5 working days of the initial report.

4.3. ***Initiating the procedures in respect of cheating:***

Where the assessment involves some form of closed or oral examination (other than the examination of a taught component which would be covered as per section 1 of this Appendix), and the assessors have identified a suspected case of cheating, any unauthorised material must be removed, and a full report sent by the Graduate Chair to the SCA Secretary. The information provided must include the PGR's name, number, and programme of study, and the PGR's previous record in relation to academic misconduct. The SCA Secretary will inform the Dean of the YGRS, and will convene a panel as above. The PGR AMIP will normally be assigned within 5 working days of the initial report.

4.4. ***Initiating the procedures in respect of false authorship :***

Where the assessor(s) believes that the assessed work contains evidence of ***false authorship*** (i.e. that a third party has either written or significantly contributed to a PGR's submission) they must provide a statement of suspicion of ***false authorship*** including references to specific pages, paragraphs or phrases which are raising concern and should include enough detail to allow the panel to investigate without specialist knowledge of the specific research topic. The Graduate Chair should send the statement to the SCA Secretary. In cases of suspected ***false authorship***, the PGR AMIP should consider the evidence provided in the statement of suspicion of ***false authorship*** and any previous work submitted by the PGR for a comparison. The panel has further powers to request a compulsory interview with the PGR and to receive preparatory documents for the work under suspicion, for example, notes and drafts where available. Lack of preparatory work may be considered evidence of ***false authorship***.

Documenting and considering evidence of false authorship

As with plagiarism, the identification of false authorship starts with an academic judgement. One of the difficulties of identifying this offence is that it will require solid evidence that an act of ***false authorship*** has taken place. While at first the suspicion may appear as a gut feeling, the examiner must provide specific evidence of their suspicion of false authorship. This may include a combination of the following features:

- **Identifiable markers:** In certain cases the PGR may not remove features which identify another author in the assignment, such as the name of a company.
- **Document properties:** Check properties of the document/file for any unusual names, dates, editing times.
- **Level of assignment:** A suspiciously good piece of work which stands out from previous work submitted by the PGR.
- **Language level:** High level of English language usage in writing which stands out from previous work.
- **Unusual/inappropriate references:** Reference to texts which have not been previously discussed with the supervisor(s) or research group, or are unrelated/inappropriate to the work.
- **Omission of core texts or methods:** The omission of core texts or methods from the work which have been previously discussed with the supervisor(s) or research group.
- **Off topic:** Some or all of the work may seem off topic and include references to a wide range of unrelated works which are tenuously linked to the research question.

- **Unusual referencing style or formatting:** Use of the wrong referencing style or unusual formatting of the work.
- **Turnitin Originality Check:** Turnitin originality check does not help in identifying assignments which contain *false authorship*.
- **AI detection software:** AI detection software may not accurately detect false authorship. Please contact SCA@york.ac.uk for the latest guidance on AI detection and do not run PGR work through freely available AI detectors online.

Consideration by the PGR Assessment Misconduct Panel

- 4.5. Each case follows a 2-stage process: an initial consideration, which decides whether there is a case to answer; if appropriate, this is followed by a full investigation, including interaction with the PGR involved.
- 4.6. A PGR AMIP may meet virtually if they prefer and should consider the case in question against their experience of other judgements made in the past by such panels in order to ensure consistency and to try to eliminate risk of bias. The PGR AMIP can consult the SCA Secretary to advise them on any process issues. The SCA Secretary must be copied into all relevant electronic correspondence between members of the investigatory panel and provided with minutes of all meetings.
- 4.7. The PGR AMIP should be convened as quickly as possible so as not to delay unnecessarily the progression or examination process. In the event that one of the members of the panel becomes unavailable to consider a case, the Chair of the panel should inform the SCA Secretary as soon as possible to allow a replacement to be assigned.
- 4.8. On the basis of their initial consideration, the PGR AMIP makes a judgement as to whether the evidence presented suggests that a full investigation would be appropriate.
 - a) The panel may determine that the evidence does not warrant further investigation. Nonetheless, if the work suffers from poor practice in attribution, a response is given to the marker, with a possible recommendation that the PGR should be advised to improve this aspect of their work. The PGR should be informed of this decision. Cases where a full investigation is not held will not count as formal cases of academic misconduct against the PGR's record.
 - b) If it is believed that the case warrants a full investigation, then the Chair of the panel informs the PGR that academic misconduct is suspected, provides the full details of the process followed, provides the full evidence that will be considered by the panel and identifies the offence which is suspected. The PGR can then respond to the panel within 7 working days. The panel will not use any material to make its judgement unless the PGR has had sight of it in advance and the opportunity to respond. The PGR should be provided with any new evidence which the panel considers. The PGR(s) should also be encouraged to seek advice from supervisors and the students' union (SU). The PGR can, in response, submit a written statement or request an interview with the PGR AMIP (PGRs should be made aware that there is no inherent benefit to an interview).
 - c) The panel should also obtain a statement from the supervisor, giving the context for the submitted work along with details of any advice given or other relevant background information.
 - d) In the event that the PGR elects to attend an interview, or that the panel determines that an interview is the most appropriate way to determine the nature of the offence, the Chair of the panel must ensure that the PGR is afforded sufficient time (normally 7 working days, counting from the final date on which the PGR could respond to the panel's allegation as set out in (b) above) before the interview to seek advice or to arrange to be accompanied. PGRs have the same right to be accompanied at a PGR AMIP interview as they do for an academic appeal

- case review: see the [Academic Appeals](#) procedure for details. A PGR may be accompanied by any member of the university and exceptions may be made for non-university accompaniment at the discretion of the Chair of the PGR AMIP. The PGR must notify the Chair in advance if they intend to bring a representative from outside the university. It is recommended that PGRs contact SU for advice and support, and who may accompany them to the case review. Any interview must include at least two members of the panel, including the Chair, and the third member should be consulted before any decision is made.
- e) Where it is the panel, rather than the PGR, which determines that an interview is required, all reasonable means should be taken to inform the PGR, and the PGR should be asked to acknowledge receipt of this information prior to the date of the interview. If the PGR does not respond, however, the procedure should not be halted. A panel may make this determination even after a written submission by a PGR. The procedures should continue regardless of whether a PGR responds.

Possible action following the submission of a PGR statement to, or interview with, the investigatory panel

4.9.

- a) If, on the balance of probabilities, misconduct is established, the PGR AMIP decides on a penalty using the table outlined in section 5, compiles a report and submits this to the SCA Secretary. The PGR will be informed of the outcome, with a copy of the full report, provided within 7 working days of the PGR AMIP decision having been made. If it has been decided that the examination or progression panel can still proceed, the full report and decision will be communicated to the examiners or members of the progression panel.
- b) The PGR AMIP can request further information from the PGR and/or the department.
- c) The PGR AMIP can decide that, on the balance of probabilities, misconduct has not occurred, in which case the work is returned to the examiners for them to decide the outcome. The PGR AMIP may make a recommendation that the markers should take into consideration the standard of scholarship.
- d) Cases should be resolved as quickly as possible, but, where work has already been submitted to the external examiner, it should be a decision of the examiners whether an oral examination can proceed if the PGR AMIP’s work is not yet complete. If the oral examination does proceed, the examination report should not be finalised until the PGR AMIP has concluded its work and reported.
- e) The panel should also report to the Graduate Chair in the PGR’s department. The Dean of YGRS will determine whether or not any external funding body needs to be informed. A note should be made on the student record, if misconduct is established

5. PGR Academic Misconduct Penalties

5.1. If a PGR is found to have committed academic misconduct in a formal PGR assessment (i.e. submission for a formal review of progress or for an award), then the PGR AMIP will meet and come to a conclusion on the extent of the misconduct and the penalty to be applied. This will take place **prior** to consideration of the academic outcome by the examiners or progression panel. In very serious cases of misconduct, the assessment process will not be completed and the PGR’s registration will be terminated. The following tables will be used by the PGR AMIP to determine the penalty.

5.2. **Penalty table**

Academic misconduct identified?	Penalty/Outcome PROGRESSION STAGE	Penalty/Outcome AWARD STAGE
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<p>No E.g. no case to answer or limited poor practice such as missing cited items from bibliography or incorrect citation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Penalty • Issues of poor practice might be reported to the progression panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Penalty • Issues of poor practice might be reported to the examiners
<p>Yes - Level 1 Significant but limited and remediable failure of academic integrity which does not undermine the integrity of the work as a whole (e.g. the PGR has made a genuine but flawed attempt to properly attribute written material or misrepresented genuine results in a manner which does not affect the validity of conclusions).</p> <p>Note that Level 1 penalties accumulate, including across stages of study. Therefore, a Level 1 offence at the Award Stage, following a Level 1 offence at the Progression Stage, will be deemed a Level 2 offence and lead to termination of the PGR's registration.</p>	<p>If first Level 1 offence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Warning issued to PGR and placed on file • PGR will FAIL this attempt, but a second attempt will be allowed (only if first attempt at progression) • Progression panel will meet, in any case, to allow for feedback <p>If second Level 1 offence - becomes a Level 2 offence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PGR registration terminated • Does not proceed to progression panel 	<p>If first Level 1 offence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal Warning issued to PGR and placed on file • PGR will be deemed not to have met the award criteria, but a revise and resubmit outcome will be allowed if the examiners judge that to be appropriate • Examination will proceed, but the outcome is limited to revise and resubmit, or award of a lower degree, with or without corrections (i.e. pass/pass with corrections outcomes are ruled out) <p>If second Level 1 offence - becomes a Level 2 offence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PGR registration terminated • Does not proceed to examination
<p>Yes - Level 2 Very significant failure of academic integrity which undermines the integrity of the work as a whole (e.g. inclusion of unattributed material is characteristic of the general approach, or some significant ideas or results central to the work uses unattributed material, or work presented is the result of fabrication or false authorship).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PGR registration terminated • Does not proceed to progression panel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PGR registration terminated • Does not proceed to examination

5.3. **Mitigation of penalties in light of compelling personal circumstances**

Once the PGR AMIP has decided that, on the balance of probabilities, academic misconduct has occurred, they will agree a penalty in accordance with the table above. In deciding on a penalty, the PGR AMIP may take into consideration other factors which, whilst not providing a defence for the academic misconduct offence, might provide mitigation when considering the penalty/outcome. If the PGR AMIP agrees that there are mitigating circumstances that might be relevant to an academic misconduct offence, then they can consider, if appropriate, the award of a lesser penalty than the one indicated by the tables above. *NB. Whilst the PGR AMIP will take such factors into consideration, the existence of mitigating circumstances will not necessarily yield a lesser penalty. In coming to their decision, the PGR AMIP will consider all the circumstances, including the seriousness of the offence.*

Circumstances that may be considered

Exceptional circumstances, as defined by the Exceptional Circumstances affecting Assessment Policy, are not normally relevant to consideration of whether or not an offence has been committed. However, there are some limited circumstances in which they may be taken into account as a mitigation when considering the penalty. These are:

- i. The personal circumstances were of such severity that their impact on the PGR's judgement at the time that the academic misconduct offence occurred makes it appropriate, in the opinion of the panel, to impose a less serious penalty by reason of those circumstances.
- ii. A specific disability, or other chronic condition, which clearly impacted the PGR's judgement, or their capacity to comply with academic standards. This may be taken into account where, through no fault of the PGR, such a disability has not been accounted for through a reasonable adjustment or where that adjustment was not made in time for the assessment. If the specific disability, or its impact, has not been declared to the University, and hence is not addressed in a university Student Support Plan (SSP), a compelling, and evidenced, explanation for this will need to be provided.

In i. and ii. above, compelling evidence will need to be provided. That evidence must show that the PGR's circumstances were sufficiently significant that it would be, in the opinion of the panel, inappropriate to impose the penalty which would otherwise be indicated by the table in Section 5. The PGR will be encouraged to disclose any such mitigating circumstances, and their impact, as part of their statement at the point at which the PGR AMIP has decided that there is a case to answer.

5.4. ***Consideration of mitigation of penalties in light of compelling personal circumstances***

In order to consider special mitigation in cases of academic misconduct, a Penalty Mitigation Panel (PMP) will be convened (via email) to consider any changes to the penalty in such circumstances. This group is composed of the Chair of the PGR AMIP (usually the Dean of YGRS), the Chair of the SCA (or delegate) and a representative of Special Cases. This brings together the required expertise from SCA and Special Cases as well as specific knowledge of the case from the PGR AMIP Chair. The Deputy Director of Student Administration and Academic Affairs (or delegate) and the SCA Secretary will be in attendance. The process will be:

- PGR AMIP makes a decision as normal on the penalty without consideration of any mitigating circumstances.
- If the PGR AMIP believes there are mitigating circumstances that might be sufficiently serious to pass the threshold, the SCA Secretary will pass the material on to the Penalty Mitigation Panel (PMP).
- The PMP will consider whether or not the penalty should be adjusted.
- the SCA Secretary will inform the PGR AMIP and the PGR of the outcome.

6. **Composition, responsibilities and procedures relating to PGR AMIPs**

Departmental and unit responsibilities to provide staff to a PGR AMIP

- 6.1 Every department or other unit with a GSB should be prepared for the Graduate Chair or equivalent to serve on a PGR AMIP.

Minimum numbers needed for a PGR AMIP to be quorate

- 6.2 A PGR AMIP is quorate with 3 members for decision-making, including the Chair, normally the Dean of the YGRS. No individual should serve on a PGR AMIP if they are supervisor, TAP member, Progression Panel member or internal examiner of the PGR being investigated or there is another conflict of interest. At least two members of the PGR AMIP, including the Chair, are to be present if a PGR is interviewed.

How a PGR AMIP considers cases

- 6.3 The Chair circulates material relevant to the case(s) to the other members of the investigatory panel for their initial decisions. This can be done electronically at the discretion of the investigatory panel members so long as this is in accordance with the University's Data Protection policies

(<https://www.york.ac.uk/records-management/dp/>). Where there is electronic sharing of documentation and email discussion the SCA Secretary must be included. The SCA Secretary will supply the administration for any meetings that are called to consider cases that are judged, after the initial consideration, to be serious. Meetings must be minuted and these minutes must be circulated amongst the investigating panel, including the SCA Secretary contact. The SCA Secretary is responsible for sending out letters to PGRs and for concluding the procedures, using standard template letters and forms.

Concluding the procedures

- 6.4 All decisions made by PGR AMIPs must be recorded by way of a written report. Minutes of meetings of the investigatory panels should be forwarded to PGRA for retention against the PGR's student record. Investigatory panels can ask to see minutes of previous meetings as an aid to their decision-making and to support consistency in their judgements. Where the investigatory panel makes a decision regarding academic misconduct, a copy of the decision is also forwarded to the Graduate Chair and the PGR Administrator in the PGR's department/centre.

7. Appeals and case reviews

- 7.1. When a PGR is informed of the outcome of the PGR AMIP's consideration of their case they must be advised that they have a right to appeal using the forms and guidance at:
<https://www.york.ac.uk/students/help/appeals/>
 PGRs may **only** appeal against decisions of a PGR AMIP on the grounds that:
- i. The Academic Misconduct procedures were not followed properly;
 - ii. The PGR AMIP reached a decision that was not reasonable in all the circumstances;
 - iii. New evidence is available which could not reasonably have been brought to the attention of the PGR AMIP at the time of its investigation;
 - iv. There was bias or reasonable perception of bias during the academic misconduct process;
 - v. The penalty imposed by the PGR AMIP was disproportionate or not permitted under the Academic Misconduct procedures.
- PGRs may **not** appeal against matters of academic judgement in relation to academic misconduct - see Section 3 for further information.

8. Where academic misconduct is alleged but not proven

- 8.1 If an internal examiner, external examiner or progression panel member initiates the academic misconduct procedures, and the PGR is subsequently found not to have committed academic misconduct by the investigatory panel, the examiner, supervisor or progression panel member should, where practicable, be replaced, unless both the PGR and the staff member agree otherwise.

9. Academic misconduct alleged after the examination has taken place

- 9.1 If academic misconduct is alleged or suspected after the examination has taken place, but before the qualification has been awarded or conferred, the award or conferment process shall be suspended pending the outcome of an investigation conducted in accordance with this procedure. If the investigatory panel decides that the academic misconduct warrants it, it may decide that a re-examination of the PGR is necessary. A re-examination under these circumstances shall be subject to the approval of PGR Special Cases.
- 9.2 If academic misconduct is alleged or suspected after the degree has been conferred, an initial investigation will be conducted by an Investigating Committee appointed by Senate under Ordinance 7. The Investigating Committee will normally be chaired by the Dean of YGRS, and include one or both of the original examiners, the current Head of Department or Dean of Faculty, and a senior academic from another department in the same Faculty. The Investigating Committee will, as far as possible, and

with reference to Ordinance 7, follow the process for a PGR AMIP, with all deviations explained to the individual against which the allegation has been made, and the Committee's justification, together with its findings and recommendations, included in its report to Senate. A Senate Panel will then be formed and follow the Procedure to support University Ordinance 7: the Senate Panel for a PGR case (see below).

9.3 Procedure to support University Ordinance 7: the Senate Panel for a PGR case

- i. [In accordance with Ordinance 7, the Investigating Committee shall determine its own procedure in the light of the particular circumstances of the case and taking advice as necessary. The procedure adopted shall accord with the principles of natural justice. The procedure proposed in this report constitutes the next step in the process as regards the establishment of a panel of Senate]. Following an investigation under University Ordinance 7 by an Investigating Committee in a case of alleged academic misconduct by a PGR, the Committee's final report and recommendation will be submitted to a panel of Senate (the Panel) for consideration and a final decision.
- ii. The Panel will comprise the following members:
 - The Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) [Chair]
 - The Chair of the Standing Committee on Assessment (ex officio)
 - The Dean of the Faculty in which the case arose (ex officio)
 - Two academic members of the Senate (one Head of Department and one elected member, nominated by the Chair; neither to be from the Department in which the case arose)

In attendance:

 - The Academic Registrar
 - The University Secretary (as Secretary to Senate)

[Secretariat: Student Administration and Academic Affairs]
- iii. The individual alleged to have committed academic misconduct will be provided with a copy of the Investigating Committee's final report and asked to provide comment in writing to the Panel. The individual will also be given the opportunity to appear before the Panel in person or via teleconference, accompanied by another person of their choice if they wish; the accompanying person may speak on the individual's behalf with the permission of the Chair.
- iv. The Panel will meet as soon as possible after it has been formally constituted to consider the Investigating Committee's report and to agree a recommendation to Senate for further action. The Panel can also invite relevant specialist University officers to the meeting to provide additional information or advice as necessary.
- v. Following its consideration of the Investigating Committee's report, the possible further actions available to the Senate Panel for onwards recommendation to Senate are as follows:

Academic misconduct identified?	Penalty/Outcome
<p>No E.g. no case to answer or limited poor practice such as missing cited items from bibliography or incorrect citation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No Penalty
<p>Yes - Level 1 Significant but limited and remediable failure of academic integrity which does not undermine the integrity of the work as a whole (e.g. the</p>	<p>If first Level 1 offence (i.e. no formal warning as per this Policy has been issued to the individual previously in relation to the degree in question. Note that formal warnings applying to any stage of</p>

<p>individual made a genuine but flawed attempt to properly attribute written material or misrepresented genuine results in a manner which does not affect the validity of conclusions).</p>	<p>study towards the degree in question are relevant):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Individual will be deemed not to have met the award criteria and so the award will be withdrawn. ● The individual will be permitted to submit a corrected version of the thesis for re-examination within twelve months (EngD/PhD/MPhil) or three months (MA/MSc (by research) of the date communicated in the formal notification of Senate’s decision. In such cases, the Senate decision communicated to the individual will include a list of required changes; the changes to the thesis must not exceed those outlined. ● At re-examination, possible outcomes will be limited as per the ‘examination following revision and resubmission’ section of the Policy on Research Degrees. ● A Formal Warning will be issued to individual and placed on file <p>If a second Level 1 offence - becomes a Level 2 offence (i.e a formal warning as per this Policy has been issued to the individual previously in relation to the degree in question. Note that formal warnings applying to any stage of study towards the degree in question are relevant):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Degree revoked as per Ordinance 7
<p>Yes - Level 2 Very significant failure of academic integrity which undermines the integrity of the work as a whole (e.g. inclusion of unattributed material is characteristic of the general approach, or some significant ideas or results central to the work uses unattributed material, or work presented is the result of fabrication or false authorship).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Degree revoked as per Ordinance 7

- vi. The Panel’s report and final recommendation will be submitted to Senate for consideration at its next meeting, but only if this meeting falls within two weeks of the Panel’s meeting. If the next scheduled Senate meeting is more than two weeks after the Panel’s meeting, its recommendation will instead be submitted to the Senate via written resolution. Following Senate's determination of the outcome, the individual concerned will normally be informed within seven days.
- vii. In accordance with Ordinance 7, there is no right of appeal against the determination of Senate which is based on academic judgement and will be final. However, the individual concerned may pursue a complaint about process through the University’s two-stage internal formal complaints procedure and, if they remain dissatisfied with the outcome of that complaint, may be able to submit a complaint externally to the OIAHE.
- viii. Following agreement by Senate of the action to be taken, the relevant offices of Student Administration and Academic Affairs will be informed in order that they may undertake the necessary completion of procedures correspondence with the individual concerned and also any corrections or amendments that

might be required to the official student record. As regards reporting the outcome of the case to external third parties (e.g. a person who submitted an allegation of academic misconduct or the current employer of the individual concerned), the University will seek formal legal advice on this matter in the context of relevant data protection and other legislation.

Appendix 4: Paid Parental Leave and Emergency and Compassionate Leave Policy

Policy on Paid Parental Leave

Introduction

- 1.1 The following policy covers instances of maternity, paternity, adoption, and shared parental leave for *York-registered PGRs* (see below) who are in receipt of a *York-funded* stipend (see below), where the date of birth or adoption falls on or after the date this policy came into effect (1 August 2019). For eligible PGRs, it also applies to those who experience a stillbirth.
- 1.2 PGRs who are self- or directly externally-funded (e.g. by an overseas government) are deemed to be subject to separate terms and conditions.

Standing of policy

- 1.3 Paid parental leave for PGRs in receipt of a stipend is not a legal right. PGRs' entitlement to paid parental leave is instead determined by the terms and conditions of their individual award, which are in turn determined by their funder.
- 1.4 The following policy outlines the terms for paid parental leave for a specific group of PGRs, as defined below, in order to bring their entitlement into line with external funders, such as UK Research and Innovation (UKRI, via the Research Councils). The policy may therefore be reviewed and amended at the discretion of the University, at any time. Any amendments must be approved by the York Graduate Research School (YGRS) PGR Policies and Programmes Committee.

Definitions and eligibility

York-registered PGRs

- 1.5 This policy applies to PGRs who are fully-registered at the University of York on degree-awarding research programmes (MA/MSc (by research), MPhil, PhD, and EngD routes), and visiting PGRs (those on RVISVIS routes). It *does not* include PGRs with a shadow record at the University (i.e. PGRs receiving funds from a grant held at York, such as a CDT, but who are registered to study elsewhere).
- 1.6 PGRs registered on a Hull York Medical School (HYMS) programme and who are registered at the University of York *are* covered by this policy. Those registered at the University of Hull *are not*.

York-funded

- 1.7 This policy applies to PGRs in receipt of a stipend directly from (i.e. central- or departmental-funded scholarships) or via (i.e. from the University as part of a grant, award or contract funded by an external organisation) the University. If in doubt, PGRs should consult their departments about their source of funding.
- 1.8 PGRs will be eligible only where the date of birth or adoption falls within their funded period, as defined by the terms and conditions of their individual award. Where the end of the funded element of parental leave extends beyond the original end of the PGR's funded period, the funded period will be extended to the end of the funded element of the parental leave.

Stipend

- 1.9 For the purposes of this policy, a stipend refers to the maintenance element of a scholarship or studentship awarded to a PGR in order to undertake their research, i.e. the element of the award which is intended to support the PGR's living costs. Therefore, PGRs in receipt of a fees-only award are not eligible for paid parental leave under this policy. Funding in support of research and training costs is also not applicable under this policy.

Qualifying period

- 1.10 There is no qualifying period for maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave.

Students subject to UKVI restrictions

- 1.11 PGRs subject to UKVI regulations must still comply with their visa regulations, as long as they continue to be sponsored by the University for visa purposes.

PGRs who are also employees of the University

- 1.12 A PGR employed under a current contract of employment with the University, open or fixed term (but not as a casual worker - see below)*, who is also in receipt of a stipend as a PGR *may* be eligible for paid parental leave, both as an employee and as a PGR, as follows:
- a) If the PGR's stipend *is* York-funded (see 1.7) *and* they are within their funded period (see 1.8), they *are* eligible for paid parental leave under this policy.
 - b) If the PGR's stipend *is not* York-funded (see 1.7) and/or they are no longer within their funded period (see 1.8), they *are not* eligible for paid parental leave under this policy.
 - c) In either case, paid parental leave as an employee falls under Human Resources' (HR) policies, and advice should be sought from HR accordingly.

**Note: This might include PGRs undertaking full- or part-time work on a non-casual basis, for example as an Associate Lecturer or administrator.*

- 1.13 PGRs who are employed under a current contract of employment with the University, open or fixed term (but not as a casual worker - see below), and *are not* in receipt of a stipend as a PGR (e.g. MSCA Fellows, research assistants and other employees undertaking the degree in their own time), *are not* within the scope of this policy.
- 1.14 A PGR employed as a casual worker** will not normally be entitled to paid parental leave as an employee (although PGRs are advised to seek current advice from HR on this point). If they are also in receipt of a stipend as a PGR, they *may* be entitled to paid parental leave under this policy, as follows:
- a) If the PGR's stipend *is* York-funded (see 1.7) *and* they are within their funded period (see 1.8), they *are* eligible for paid parental leave under this policy.
 - b) If the PGR's stipend *is not* York-funded (see 1.7) and / or they are no longer within their funded period (see 1.8), they *are not* eligible for paid parental leave under this policy.

***Note: This may include Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs). Should Departments employ GTAs on different contracts, those employees may be entitled to paid parental leave as employees, and are advised to seek advice from HR.*

Payment terms

- 1.15 Unless otherwise stated, there is no variation in terms on the basis of the type of paid parental leave taken. Further, in all instances the terms described below apply to an eligible PGR, as defined above; it does not extend to their partner (where relevant), unless they too are eligible under this policy.

Rate of pay

- 1.16 The rate of pay will mirror that laid out in UK Research and Innovation's Terms and Conditions of Research Council Training Grants at the commencement of the period of leave, reduced or increased on a *pro rata* basis in line with the stipend rate paid by or via York.
- 1.17 Should the UKRI policy change, the University will review this policy and may or may not align it with the change (see above).

Maternity leave

- 1.18 Overall, and notwithstanding any periods of unpaid leave, PGRs are entitled to 39 weeks of paid maternity leave. Rates of pay will be modelled as follows:
- The first 26 weeks should be paid at full stipend rate, pro-rated as necessary for part time PGRs.
 - The following 13 weeks will be paid at a level commensurate with statutory maternity pay (£148.68 per week at the time of publication).
- 1.19 The duration of funding will be dictated by the period of leave the PGR chooses to take, up to the maximum stated in 1.18.

Paternity leave

- 1.20 PGRs are entitled to up to 10 days paid paternity leave on full stipend.

Adoption Leave

- 1.21 PGRs are entitled to paid parental leave where they adopt. In such cases, the PGR must be identified as either the 'lead' adopter (and thus entitled to paid parental leave equivalent to that outlined above under 'maternity leave') or the 'support' adopter (and thus entitled to paid parental leave equivalent to that outlined above under 'paternity leave'). In either case, the PGR's partner (where relevant), regardless of their student or employment status, must not be claiming the same rights as the PGR (i.e. a PGR and their partner cannot both be claiming the equivalent of the paid parental leave outlined above under 'maternity leave' simultaneously); PGRs may be required to provide evidence that this is not the case.

Shared Parental Leave

- 1.22 Shared Parental Leave applies only where both the PGR and their partner qualify for paid parental leave under this policy, or where the partner is a PGR eligible for shared parental leave under the terms of their funder (e.g. those funded by UKRI).
- 1.23 PGRs may be entitled to up to 50 weeks of Shared Parental Leave depending on the individual circumstances.

Extension of parental leave

- 1.24 PGRs who do not choose to take their full entitlement of paid parental leave when they first apply may later extend their period of paid leave up to the maximum (see above). In order to extend a period of paid leave, PGRs must reapply, as per the process outlined below.

Repayment of funds

- 1.25 Unless exceptional circumstances apply, PGRs will normally be required to repay any funds paid under this policy if they do not complete the final examination process (up to and including final deposit of the thesis, where applicable). This would not apply to PGRs who have undergone examination and failed to gain the intended award or were recommended a lower award post examination.
- 1.26 PGRs will normally be required to repay any funds paid under this policy where they return from a period of paid parental leave earlier than initially stated. In such cases, the repayments will be limited to the balance of any funds paid to the PGR in advance, calculated from the date of return.

Applying for paid parental leave

- 1.27 Unless otherwise stated, there is no variation in terms on the basis of the type of paid parental leave taken.

How to apply

- 1.28 PGRs must follow the process outlined on the York Graduate Research School web pages: <https://www.york.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/academic/change/loa/ppl>
- 1.29 PGRs should:
- a) Advise their department as soon as possible of their intention to take parental leave;
 - b) Complete a leave of absence application (see 1.28);
 - c) Complete a funding request form (see 1.28).
- 1.30 PGRs are responsible for notifying PGRA of any change to their intentions or circumstances, so that advice may be provided about the impact (if any) on their funding.

Department responsibilities

- 1.31 Departments should:
- a) Check PGR's source of funding and advise PGRA when the associated leave of absence paperwork is submitted for consideration;
 - b) Manage funds and payment schedule as per instructions from PGRA.
- 1.32 Departments are responsible for notifying PGR Administration of any change to the intentions or circumstances of a PGR in receipt of parental leave payments under this policy.

Policy on Emergency and Compassionate Leave

1. This Policy aims to help support PGRs experiencing difficult life events. PGRs are reminded that if they find themselves facing such difficulties, they should approach their supervisor(s) for support and advice as a matter of urgency. PGRs can also access a range of [support services](#) within the University.

2. The Emergency and Compassionate Leave Policy is for PGRs who need time off on a short term basis (normally up to a week, including 5 working days) to deal with an emergency situation or bereavement. **All PGRs at the University of York are entitled to apply under this Policy for leave from their programme.**
3. This Policy is for dealing with the **immediate and short-term impact** of the death or the serious illness/injury of individuals close to the PGR (typically dependents or other close family members). It is not for other caring-related emergencies, for example childcare issues, or for household emergencies, for which an authorised absence or annual leave would normally be considered more appropriate.
4. The longer term impact of the death or the serious illness/injury of individuals close to a PGR - where the PGR needs to take a longer period of leave from their programme than accommodated under this Policy - should normally be dealt with as a standard Leave of Absence.
5. **Student Visa holders who need to take emergency or compassionate leave for more than seven days must seek advice from the Immigration Advice Service and follow the procedure for authorised absence or Leave of Absence.**

Standard emergency and compassionate leave

6. Requests for standard emergency and compassionate leave should be made to PGRA as an exceptional Leave of Absence via the relevant Google form. **Standard emergency and compassionate leave is not paid** but does automatically extend a PGR's progression (if applicable), enrolment and submission deadlines by the duration of the leave approved. Requests will not normally be backdated more than 30 days. Student Visa holders will need to check with the Visa Compliance team as to the terms and conditions of their Visa.

Paid emergency and compassionate leave

7. Emergency and compassionate leave up to a maximum of 5 days may be paid to a PGR who is UKRI funded, OR funded by or via the University AND meets the 'York-registered' AND 'York-funded' eligibility conditions set out in Appendix 4 of the PoRD. Paid emergency and compassionate leave will normally be restricted to the bereavement of a close family member (typically a child/partner/parent/sibling/grandparent).
8. Requests for paid emergency and compassionate leave should be made to PGRA as an exceptional Leave of Absence via the relevant Google form. Requests will not normally be backdated more than 30 days. Student Visa holders will need to check with the Visa Compliance team as to the terms and conditions of their Visa.
9. Paid emergency and compassionate leave automatically extends a PGR's funding end date, progression (if applicable), enrolment and submission deadlines by the duration of the leave approved.

Bereaved parent leave

10. A PGR who is a bereaved parent in the event that child is under 18 years of age (including stillbirths if the PGR does not meet the eligibility conditions for paid parental leave as set out in Appendix 4 of the PoRD) will be entitled to two weeks (14 days, including 10 working days) paid leave **regardless** of their funding source (i.e. including self funded PGRs). We recognise that it is likely that bereaved parent leave will need to be followed by a standard Leave of Absence.

11. Requests for bereaved parent leave should be made to PGRA as an exceptional Leave of Absence via the relevant Google form. Requests shall not normally be backdated more than 30 days. Student Visa holders will need to check with the Visa Compliance team as to the terms and conditions of their Visa.
12. Bereaved parent leave automatically extends a PGR's progression (if applicable), enrolment and submission deadlines. A PGR funded by the UKRI or by or via the University (who meets the 'York-registered' AND 'York-funded' eligibility conditions set out in Appendix 4 of the PoRD) will have their funding end date extended by two weeks; a PGR who does not fall into these categories will receive a lump sum equivalent of the funding extension of a PGR funded by or via the University.

Emergency and Compassionate Leave Policy: evidence

13. The University reserves the right to request relevant evidence to support requests for paid compassionate/emergency leave but will be mindful of the difficult circumstances inherent to such requests. We recognise that it would not be appropriate to request medical evidence pertaining to individuals who are not themselves students of the University.

Appendix 5: Policy Framework for Distance Learning PGR Programmes

Introduction

- 1 This is the University's policy framework for distance learning PGR programmes. It should be read in conjunction with the University's Policy on Research Degrees (PoRD) and Regulations for Research Degree Awards (Regulation 2). If there is any inconsistency between the PoRD and this framework, this framework should apply. A wiki site provides examples of good practice in distance learning PGR provision.

The nature and purpose of distance learning PGR programmes

- 2 A distance learning PGR programme – which could alternatively be called an independent off-site PGR programme - is for PGRs who are enrolled solely at York and undertake their research away from campus, whether in the UK or internationally, and without requiring a collaborative partner (if a collaborative partner is involved please refer to the *Framework for Collaborative Off-site and Collaborative Split-site PhD Programmes*). Supervision, training and support take place primarily via video-conferencing.

Advantages and challenges of distance learning PGR programmes

- 3 Distance learning opens up PGR programmes to those unable to attend a university campus on a regular basis. For many PGRs, the great attraction of distance learning is that it affords great freedom and flexibility, enabling academic commitments to be combined with life responsibilities (e.g. caring and/or employment). For other PGRs, distance learning is a consequence of the nature of their research project (e.g. fieldwork or archive access). Whilst distance learning has improved access to PGR programmes, the spatial, and often temporal, separation between PGRs and their supervisors, peers and faculty presents a number of challenges, which may lead to a high rate of attrition if not dealt with effectively.

Approval process

- 4 All distance learning PGR programmes should be approved for planning purposes (may not be required for distance learning variants of existing PGR programmes), prior to approval of the academic case being sought from the PGR Policies and Programmes Committee (PPPC). Standard home/international PGR fees apply unless a department gains formal agreement for an exception.
- 5 PPPC will want to be convinced that the department has planned how it will provide appropriate training, pastoral support and an active research community for PGRs at a distance. PPPC will also need to consider and approve any departmental attendance requirements (see below).
- 6 The University expects that most distance learning PGR programmes will be PhDs but distance learning MPhil and Master of Arts (by research) and Master of Science (by research) programmes are also permitted where a department can provide a convincing rationale.

Programme details

Duration

- 7 The period of enrolment for a PGR on a distance learning PGR programme will be the same as that for PGRs on the equivalent campus-based PGR programme.

Naming convention and final award

- 8 A distance learning PGR programme should normally be advertised as PhD (or the appropriate award) in XXXX by distance learning.
- 9 A PGR who successfully completes a distance learning PGR programme shall be awarded a PhD (or the appropriate award) in XXXX (their subject) from York and their degree certificate shall not refer to the fact that they were primarily studying away from York.

Admission requirements and process

- 10 The admissions requirements (academic and English language) are the same as those for the equivalent campus-based PGR programme.
- 11 The admissions procedures for a distance learning PGR programme should replicate those of the equivalent campus-based PGR programme, with the exception that applicants should be taken through the distance learning admissions checklist as part of the interview process (see below). The aim of the checklist is to ensure that: (i) there are no barriers to the applicant studying by distance learning, (ii) that the applicant and their prospective supervisor(s) understand the challenges and limitations of distance learning. The decision to admit a PGR to a distance-learning PGR programme should always include the department's Programme Director for Distance Learning PGR Programmes (or their nominee) and/or the Graduate Chair (or their nominee) in addition to the supervisor(s).
- 12 Publicity about a distance learning PGR programme should be transparent about the academic and practical challenges associated with distance learning. PGR costs (e.g. for visas, travel and accommodation to meet attendance and in-person supervision requirements) associated with participation in a distance learning PGR programme must be clearly stated.

Information

- 13 Distance learning PGRs should be provided, by their department, with clear written information about studying at a distance in the form of an online handbook.

Requirements for attendance at York

- 14 Distance learning PGRs will spend the vast majority of their time working away from York, with supervision primarily by video-conferencing. Academic visits to York during a PGR's enrolment should be short (each less than eight weeks duration) and, for most, will be infrequent.
- 15 The University's attendance requirements for distance learning PGRs are a visit to York for induction (see below, including the consequences of non-attendance) and for the final examination (see below, including the consequences for non-attendance).
- 16 Departments are strongly encouraged to put in place departmental attendance requirements to support their distance learning PGRs' research and professional development and integration into the research community. For example, a department might require an annual one/two week block of attendance for core training, or yearly (perhaps biennial for part-time PGRs) attendance at its PGR conference, with the latter being timed to coincide with a TAP or progression meeting. The timing, nature and purpose of departmental attendance requirements must be approved by PPC and clearly communicated to PGRs from the application stage onwards to allow them to plan appropriately. PGRs who are unable to meet departmental attendance requirements are required to seek permission from their GSB. PGRs who fail to meet departmental attendance requirements without the required GSB approval will be given a formal warning that their enrolment is at risk and may have their enrolment terminated if the situation remains unresolved.

Attendance at York: practical considerations

- 17 International PGRs subject to UKVI restrictions will be required to apply for an appropriate student visa to meet attendance requirements. Departmental attendance requirements should be designed with visa restrictions in mind. It is the PGR's responsibility to apply for visas and meet visa requirements.
- 18 It is a PGR's responsibility to organise and fund (e.g. travel, accommodation and visas) any trips that they need to undertake to meet attendance requirements or for in-person supervision meetings (see below).

Induction

- 19 Distance learning PGRs are required to visit York for induction. The University's expectations for an induction visit to York are a minimum of five working days, ideally within two months of the start of the programme, but the exact duration and timing of the induction is set by the relevant department. Any programme-level exception to the University's induction requirements must be approved by PPPC.
- 20 Any exception for an individual PGR to the induction requirements set by the department for their programme must be approved on the request of the relevant Graduate Chair by the Dean (if pre-enrolment) or SC (if post-enrolment) with the decision recorded in GSB minutes and on SkillsForge. PGRs who fail to meet their programme's induction requirements without Dean/PGR Special Cases approval will have their enrolment terminated.
- 21 The induction visit should be fully-timetabled and carefully structured to provide maximum value to the PGRs. The induction must include: a formal supervision meeting with feedback on a PGR's work (e.g. the research proposal), a general PGR departmental induction and a bespoke departmental induction that focuses on their needs as distance learners.
- 22 Unless there is a good reason to do otherwise, the timing of the induction should be scheduled to coincide with one of the two main University PGR annual start points so that PGRs can attend a YGRS central induction session, students union welcome activities and standard PGR departmental induction programme.

Supervision

- 23 Supervision should be conducted in accordance with the rules of the PoRD, and any additional departmental requirements, with the exception that both formal and informal supervision meetings will normally take place via video-conferencing.
- 24 Of the (minimum) eight formal supervision meetings/enrolment year it is strongly recommended that at least one should be in-person (i.e. where the PGR and their supervisor(s) are co-located in York or another location (e.g. a conference)).
- 25 The purpose and likely frequency of informal supervision meetings and contact should be made clear for the PGR by their supervisor, at induction and within the relevant handbook (or equivalent). Departments are strongly encouraged to ensure that some form of contact between the PGR and supervisor occurs at least monthly, if not more frequently (see wiki site for good practice).

Monitoring and progression

- 26 The policy and procedures for monitoring and progression for a PGR undertaking a distance learning PGR programme are the same as for a campus-based PGR programme at York but Thesis Advisory Panel (TAP) and progress review meetings should take place by video-conferencing unless they coincide with a PGR's visit to York. Permission does not need to be obtained from PGRA for a TAP/progression meeting to be held by video-conferencing.

Research community

- 27 The University is committed to ensuring that all PGRs, including those on distance learning programmes, benefit from a supportive academic community. Departments will, therefore, need to consider how this can be achieved, for example by facilitating active remote participation in research seminars and other research-related events and establishing learning communities that integrate their distance learning and campus-based PGRs (see wiki site for good practice).

Training and development

- 28 PGRs on a distance learning PGR programme must complete any training that is mandatory at York, for example the Research Integrity Tutorial, and are expected to complete any recommended training, for

example *Becoming an Effective Researcher*.

- 29 Departments should take proactive steps to make their departmental training accessible to, and appropriate for, PGRs on distance learning PGR programmes. This might involve, for instance, facilitating remote participation in training sessions, modifying and recording training sessions for asynchronous consumption, and/or developing interactive online resources (see wiki site for good practice). Training needs should be discussed at the admissions stage to ensure that any essential requirements can be met.
- 30 Discussion about training needs (particularly where a department mandates particular courses/taught modules) should take place at an early stage (pre-admission), so that details of how these needs will be met can be agreed and recorded.

Access to facilities and resources

- 31 PGRs on a distance learning PGR programme primarily rely on online or local facilities and resources, as they will only have limited access to the University and department's on-site facilities and resources. Departments should ensure that PGRs have access to the necessary facilities and resources at admission and monitor this throughout a PGR's enrolment.
- 32 PGRs on a distance learning PGR programme should have the same access to departmental funding opportunities (e.g. conference funds) as PGRs on the equivalent campus-based PGR programme.

Examination

- 33 The examination process for a PGR undertaking a distance learning PGR programme is the same as for a campus-based PGR programme. Distance learning PGRs may request an offsite, hybrid or online oral examination but if this is not approved by the Standing Committee on Assessment they must attend York for this purpose.

Transfers

- 34 Where academically appropriate, subject to any UKVI restrictions (if applicable), and with the permission of the department and PGR Special Cases, a distance learning PGR programme may transfer to the equivalent campus-based programme. Transfers from a campus-based PGR programme to the equivalent distance learning PGR programme are likewise possible, subject to the permission of the department (which should evaluate the individual against the distance learning checklist as per a new applicant) and PGR Special Cases.

Teaching opportunities

- 35 Access to paid teaching opportunities at York for PGRs on distance learning PGR programmes will be limited, and such opportunities will not be available to those who do not have the right to work in the UK and/or are based outside the UK. The Policy on Graduate Teaching Assistants would apply as normal (e.g. PGRs must meet the training requirements).
- 36 Departments are, however, encouraged to consider if it is feasible to support this aspect of PGRs' development in other ways, for instance finding opportunities for tutoring on online programmes for other providers (where available) and/or allowing PGRs to observe teaching sessions during visits.

PGR representation and engagement

- 37 PGRs on distance learning PGR programmes should be included in departmental and University mechanisms for PGR representation and engagement, as per other PGRs. Departments should ensure that the distance learning PGR community is appropriately represented on relevant departmental fora.

Quality assurance

- 38 Departments should regularly review (with their DL PGR community) the accessibility of their PGR offer (i.e. including training, networking, support) to ensure that DL PGRs are able to access key activities and/or are provided with suitable high quality alternatives.
- 39 Departments should monitor the progress of, and outcomes for, distance learning PGRs. The effectiveness of distance learning PGR programmes should be specifically considered as part of the Annual Review and Periodic Review processes. The University may also wish, on occasion, to conduct a more in-depth review of distance learning PGR provision.

Management of distance learning PGR programmes

- 40 Each department should appoint a programme leader for distance learning PGR programmes to oversee the provision. This post can be (but does not have to be) filled by the department's Graduate Chair or equivalent.

Checklist for distance learning PGR interviews

- 41 The following issues should be discussed at the interview with the applicant. It is recommended that the department's Programme Director for Distance Learning PGR Programmes (or their nominee) and/or the Graduate Chair (or their nominee) should be present at the interview.

Fit with distance learning

- a) That there are good reasons (professional and/or personal) for applying to a distance learning PGR programme as opposed to a campus-based PGR programme and that the applicant has sufficient time to undertake the PGR programme on a full-time or part-time basis (as applicable) taking account of their professional and/or personal circumstances;
- b) That access to campus-based facilities and resources will be limited and therefore that the applicant's research project can be conducted using facilities and resources which are available to the applicant online or locally (e.g. a work-based or field-based project). If the PGR programme cannot be conducted without the support of a local partner then the *Framework on Collaborative Off-site and Split-site PGR Programmes* should apply;
- c) That the applicant has a good understanding of the psychological challenges of distance learning and can evidence their suitability (e.g. in terms of self-motivation, independence etc.) for this mode of study;
- d) That the applicant has considered the implications of distance learning for their professional aspirations, notably the lack of teaching opportunities if they wish to pursue an academic career;

Academic considerations

- e) That the applicant and their proposed supervisor are willing to be supervised/undertake supervision remotely via video-conferencing and that any practical issues (e.g. time-differences between the applicant and the supervisor or national restrictions on access to particular technologies) can be managed;
- f) That the applicant will be able to engage actively with the department's research community (e.g. taking into account infrastructure, logistics, time-differences);
- g) That access to campus-based training will be limited and therefore that the applicant has (e.g. due to a prior qualification/experience) any skills that are essential to their research project or that such skills can be developed in good time via remote training, during visits to York or by other means (and how any additional costs e.g. for non-York training will be met). That the applicant's other individual training and development needs can be met (e.g. considering infrastructure, logistics, time-differences);

Practical considerations

- h) That the applicant understands and will be able to meet University and departmental attendance requirements i.e. that there are no personal/professional barriers to meeting these requirements, and that the applicant will be able to organise and fund the necessary trips (including obtaining and paying for visas if applicable) ;
- i) That the applicant's remote working environment is suitable e.g. that the applicant has appropriate study space available to them and appropriate internet connectivity, software and hardware to support research and video-conferencing, or that such will be provided by the department.

Distance learning PGR offer letters

- 42 The following elements will be included in the offer letter to distance learning PGRs:
- (a) That the programme is offering on a distance learning basis, with infrequent academic visits to York of less than eight-weeks duration and supervision primarily be video-conferencing;
 - (b) That the applicant must meet University and departmental attendance requirements (including attendance at York for induction and for the final examination) or risk their enrolment being terminated ;
 - (c) That the applicant is responsible for the organisation and the costs associated with meeting the University and departmental attendance requirements and the in-person supervision requirements (including obtaining and paying for visas if applicable);
 - (d) That there will be limited access to York-based University and departmental resources and training.

Appendix 6: Policy Framework for Collaborative Off-site and Collaborative Split-site PGR Programmes

Introduction

1. This is the University's policy framework for collaborative off-site and collaborative split-site PGR programmes. It should be read in conjunction with the University's Policy on Research Degrees (PoRD) and Regulations for Research Degree Awards (Regulation 2). If there is any inconsistency between the PoRD and this framework, this framework should apply.
2. Exceptions to this framework may be agreed on a case by case basis by PPPC where there is a clear justification and the changes are academically appropriate.
3. The details with respect to CITY College off-site PhD provision are contained in the York-CITY Collaborative PhD Handbook which is subject to PPPC approval (and which takes precedence over the PoRD where there is disagreement). PGRs on off-site PhD programmes with CITY do not sign individual PGR agreements.

The nature and purpose of collaborative off-site and split-site PhD programmes

4. Collaborative off-site and collaborative split-site PhDs are for PGRs who are enrolled solely at the University of York and are eligible for a single University of York award (not a joint or double PhD) whilst spending a significant period of their programme away from the University at an approved research organisation (the partner).
5. Collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs differ in the proportion of time spent at York and the partner as set out in the table below:

	Standard (campus-based) PhD	Collaborative split-site PhD	Collaborative off-site PhD*
Where PGRs are based	PGRs are based at the York campus.	PGRs split their time between the partner and York.	PGRs spend the vast majority of their time at the partner, with only short and infrequent visits to York.
Maximum attendance at York	The full period of enrolment.	Half the normal period of enrolment.	Short study visits only (no visits lasting for more than eight weeks) and typically limited to two-four weeks of visit per year.
Minimum attendance at York	Half the normal period of enrolment. Mobility for fieldwork and visits to other academic institutions is permitted but subject to restrictions and time limits (see section 15 of the PoRD): normally no more than 12 months <i>away</i> from York.	Normally eight months across the programme (although may be lower if academically justifiable) including an induction period (of at least five working days) and the final examination. At least one visit in the normal period of enrolment must last for more than eight weeks.	An induction period (of at least five working days) and the final examination.

*Distance learning PhDs: similar to a collaborative off-site PhD but without the involvement of a partner (see Appendix 5 of the PoRD).

6. Partners may include HEIs which choose not to make use of their own degree-awarding-powers (e.g. HEIs in low- or middle-income countries who are capacity building), research facilities/institutes and related institutions (e.g. national museums and archives) without degree-awarding-powers, and businesses with the necessary facilities for advanced research. Partners may be based in the UK or internationally and should be in good academic standing.
7. The choice between a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD will need to be made on a case by case basis and will depend on a number of factors both academic - including the intellectual needs of the PGR, the nature of the research project, and what the partner can provide in terms of a research community and training for the PGR - and practical - including funding arrangements, any restrictions on a PGR's mobility for professional and/or personal reasons, and UKVI rules where applicable. For example, where a PGR is based in a highly regarded international research facility, which provides exemplary access to a research community and training provision, and the facility's equipment is fundamental to the PGR's research project an off-site PhD programme may be the most appropriate option. An off-site PhD programme may also be the most appropriate option where a PGR is employed as an academic at the international partner and cannot come to York for longer mobility periods for professional and/or personal reasons.
8. Collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs both fall under the University's collaborative provision rules and York is ultimately responsible for the standards and academic quality of the provision. This means that there must be a process of due diligence undertaken on the partner, including its reputation and ability to provide an appropriate research environment for the PGR. There must also be a formal agreement in place to cover PGRs on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD.
9. Collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs can be offered on an individual PGR basis but also, and indeed preferably (for economies of scale and quality enhancement), for cohorts of PGRs as part of a broader link between York and the partner e.g. an HEI trying to increase the number of its faculty with UK PhDs, or a national museum/archive with close research links to a York department.

Advantages of collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs

10. For a department, collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs can provide a means to develop or extend research collaborations with a range of organisations and, in the case of international partners, to recruit high quality international PGRs. Collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs may also appeal to funding bodies who want to develop capacity in a partner but want the reassurance of working with an established UK university.
11. For the University, collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs provide transparency when a PGR is undertaking research at a partner. Due diligence checks will have been undertaken on the partner (the scale depending on the risk) and there will be clarity about the respective roles and responsibilities of York and the partner. This, in turn, helps the University meet its duty of care to the PGR (e.g. in terms of the quality of research facilities, health and safety, and provision of appropriate support), fulfil any responsibilities with regard to visas (if applicable), and safeguard the integrity of research being undertaken in its name.
12. For the partner, collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs provides a formal link (which can be publicised) with York thus strengthening the relationship between the two. They also provide clarity around the support the partner is expected to provide for a PGR and how this is recognised by York (e.g. financially and/or agreement with respect to how the partner/co-supervisor will be acknowledged in any publications or other outcomes arising from the PhD research project).

13. For PGRs, collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs enable them to be based in the location of their research and/or where they need to be for professional and/or personal reasons but still enrolled on a York PhD programme. Doing a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD means that a PGR will benefit from a supervisor and support from York (when in attendance or by distance learning), plus local support from the partner, which in addition to research facilities may include co-supervision (or other personal support, see below) and access to a research community and training opportunities.

Key considerations in choosing a partner

14. The quality of the partner is key to ensuring a successful collaborative off-site or split-site PhD. Partners must be in good standing, academically and more generally (e.g. financially and in terms of governance), and must be able to provide a suitable working environment for PhD PGRs. Where a collaborative split-site or off-site PhD is part of an initiative to build research capacity at the partner, particular attention must be paid to how the training and support needs of the PGR(s) will be met during their PhD.

Approval process and fees

15. Where the partner is international, it is recommended that, as a first step, the department works with Global Partnerships to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the partner.
16. For the approval of a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD proposal with a new partner, a department will need to follow the current off-site/split-site PhD approval process, which includes due diligence, to receive Planning approval (if required) and PPPC approval (always required but normally undertaken by Chair's action). Depending on the partner, the approval process may include a requirement for further due diligence and/or a departmental visit. Once approval has been granted, the individual PGR agreement(s) can be produced and signed (see below).
17. For the approval of additional collaborative off-site or split-site PhDs with an existing collaborative off-site or split-site partner, a department will flag any amendments to the existing proposal for planning approval (if required) and PPPC approval (by Chair's action). Once full approval has been granted, the individual PGR agreement(s) can be produced and signed (see below).
18. Standard home or international PhD fees apply unless a department gains formal agreement for an exception. Any transfer of money to a partner must also be formally agreed by Planning.

Programme details

Duration

19. The period of enrolment for a PGR on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD will be the same as that for PGRs on the equivalent campus-based PhD programme.

Naming convention and final award

20. A PGR who successfully completes a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD shall be awarded a PhD in XXXX (their subject) from York and their degree certificate shall not refer to the partner or the fact that they were primarily studying away from York.
21. The partner may wish to provide a certificate of attendance, transcript or similar that recognises that the PGR has been based there and includes any courses or other training undertaken at the partner. Any certificate of attendance, transcript or similar to be issued by the partner must first be approved by York and must not imply that the partner has granted an award.

PGR agreements

22. A PGR agreement should be signed (normally by York, the partner and the PGR) before a PGR enrolls on

a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD. At York, this process will normally be managed by the Research and Knowledge Exchange Contracts Team. Individual PGR agreements will normally follow a University template, which sets out the roles and responsibilities of York and the partner with respect to that individual PGR.

Multiple off-site or split-site PhDs with the same partner

23. Where a department and a partner are planning to host a number of collaborative off-site or split-site PhD PGRs (either a cohort or spread over a number of years), an academic from the department at York should be nominated to coordinate the provision and oversee the relationship with the partner.
24. For a cohort of off-site or split-site PhD PGRs, an overarching cohort agreement may be developed to cover common practices across the cohort so that the content of the individual PGR agreements can be minimised (e.g. with the individual PGR agreements being brief appendices to the overarching cohort agreement). Where several off-site or split-site PhD PGRs will start over a number of years with the same partner, a partner-specific template individual PGR agreement may be more appropriate to allow for changes as the relationship develops.

Suitability of the partner's research environment

25. The department is responsible for checking that the partner is able to provide the required research facilities (e.g. laboratories, libraries, computing facilities, specialist equipment, desk space) and that these are of a suitable standard and, where applicable, broadly comparable to what would be available at York.
26. The department will also be required to undertake a risk assessment and check that the partner has suitable policies in place e.g. with respect to: (i) health and safety (including insurance), (ii) equality and diversity, (iii) research integrity, and (iv) secure data management.

Data sharing and initial intellectual property (IP) agreement

27. A data sharing agreement will need to be in place between York and the partner prior to the application of any PGRs. It is also recommended that an indicative intellectual property agreement is negotiated at this stage to avoid later delay.

PGR status and enrolment

28. A PGR on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD is enrolled on an existing full-time or part-time PhD programme at York (which may be three or four years in duration or part-time equivalent) but their collaborative off-site or split-site status will be recorded and clearly flagged on SkillsForge and SITS. It is accepted that a PGR may also need to register at the partner but this process should not bestow any rights to an award from the partner.

Admission requirements and process

29. The admission requirements (academic and English language) for a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD are the same as those for the equivalent campus-based PhD programme.
30. Collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs may or may not be directly advertised. The partner may be involved in the admissions process (e.g. a proposed co-supervisor from the partner may be involved in shortlisting and interviewing) but the final decision on offering a place shall rest with York.
31. As part of the admissions process, a department must consider carefully and discuss with the partner and applicant the suitability of the project(s) and the individual PGR(s) for this mode of study.
32. PGR costs (e.g. for visas, travel and accommodation to meet attendance and in-person supervision requirements) associated with participation in a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD must be clearly stated.

Information

33. PGRs on collaborative off-site or split-site PhDs should be provided, by their department, with clear written information about studying on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD in the form of an online handbook.

Requirements for attendance at York

34. The University’s attendance requirements (see also the in-person supervision recommendations) are as follows:

Collaborative split-site PhD	Collaborative off-site PhD
The PGR will split their time between the partner and York during their enrolment.	The PGR will spend the vast majority of their time at the partner, with only short and infrequent study visits to York during their enrolment.
Minimum attendance at York: normally eight months across the programme (although may be lower if academically justifiable) including for an induction period (of at least five working days) and for the final examination. At least one study visit in the normal period of enrolment must last for more than eight weeks.	Minimum attendance at York: for an induction period (of at least five working days) and for the final examination.
Maximum attendance at York: half the normal period of enrolment.	Maximum attendance at York: normally no more than two weeks/year, with no study visits which last for more than eight weeks.

35. Attendance at York will be negotiated on an individual (or cohort) basis, within the attendance constraints specified above, and set out in the individual (or an overarching cohort) PGR agreement. Attendance at York may be specified in terms of duration (number of weeks at York) and/or presence at particular contact points (e.g. TAP meetings, progression meetings, departmental conferences or other key departmental milestones).
36. Attendance at York should be designed to maximise its value, in terms of advancing the research project and/or supporting the intellectual development of the PGR (e.g. providing access to specific resources at York, enabling the PGR to undertake an experiment under the direct supervision of the York supervisor, providing opportunities for the PGR to participate in training and integrate with the research community).
37. Any exception to the University's induction or in-programme attendance requirements (as set out above) for an individual (or cohort) must be approved by PPPC (Chair’s action) during the approval stage, or by PGR Special Cases on the request of the relevant GSB if a PGR has already started. PGRs who are unable to meet departmental attendance requirements are required to seek permission from their GSB. PGRs who fail to meet University and/or departmental attendance requirements without the required approval will be given a formal warning that their enrolment is at risk and may have their enrolment terminated if the situation remains unresolved.

Attendance at York: practical considerations

38. International PGRs subject to UKVI restrictions will be required to apply for an appropriate student visa to meet attendance requirements. The timing of attendance requirements will need to be designed with visa restrictions in mind. It is the PGR’s responsibility to apply for visas and meet visa requirements.

39. It is the responsibility of the PGR or their funder to organise and fund (e.g. travel, accommodation and visas) any trips that they need to undertake to meet attendance requirements or for in-person supervision meetings (see below).

Induction

40. PGRs on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD are required to visit York for an induction period of at least five working days (longer if this is required by their department e.g. for the provision of introductory training) at the start of their programme, normally within two months of their first enrolment on the programme.
41. The induction visit should be fully-timetabled and carefully structured to provide maximum value to the PGRs. The induction must include: a formal supervision meeting with feedback on a PGR's work (e.g. the research proposal), a general PGR departmental induction and a bespoke departmental induction that focuses on their particular needs.
42. Unless there is a good reason to do otherwise, the timing of the induction should be scheduled to coincide with one of the two main University PGR annual start points so that PGRs can attend the YGRS central induction session, students' union welcome activities and standard PGR departmental induction programme.

Appointment of supervisors, co-supervisors and pastoral advisers/mentors

43. The main supervisor for a PGR undertaking a collaborative off-site and split-site PhD must, in accordance with the PoRD, always be from York.
44. The details of the role of the partner in co-supervising and/or supporting a PGR should be agreed in advance of the PGR starting the programme and set out in the individual (or overarching cohort) PGR agreement.
45. Where suitably qualified staff are available, the partner may provide one or more co-supervisors (subject to the approval of the department at York, as set out in the PoRD). Any co-supervisors from the partner should undertake training to familiarise themselves with York's approach to PGR supervision and relevant policies and procedures.
46. Additionally or alternatively (particularly if the partner cannot provide a co-supervisor for a PGR), the partner may provide a member(s) of a PGR's Thesis Advisory Panel. Additionally or alternatively, the partner may provide a pastoral adviser or mentor but in this case it should be clear to the PGR that this person's role is complementary to, rather than replacing, the pastoral support offered by their supervisor(s).

Supervision

47. Supervision should be conducted in accordance with the rules of the PoRD, and any additional departmental requirements, with the exception that when the PGR is located at the partner both formal and informal supervision meetings with the York-based supervisor will normally take place via video-conferencing.
48. Of the (minimum) eight formal supervision meetings/enrolment year between the York-based supervisor and the PGR, it is strongly recommended that at least one should be in-person (i.e. where the PGR and the York-based supervisor are co-located either in York, at the partner, or at another location e.g. a conference). It is considered good practice for a York-based supervisor to visit their PGR at the partner at least once during the course of the PGR's PhD.
49. The purpose and likely frequency of informal supervision meetings and contact should be made clear for the PGR by their supervisor, at induction and within the relevant handbook (or equivalent).

Departments are strongly encouraged to ensure that some form of contact between the PGR and their York-based supervisor occurs at least monthly, if not more frequently.

Monitoring and progression

50. The policy and procedures for monitoring and progression for a PGR undertaking a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD are the same as for a campus-based PhD but, unless otherwise set out in the individual (or overarching cohort) PGR agreement, TAP and progress review meetings should take place by video-conferencing (with the PGR and any local co-supervisor or TAP member (as applicable) at the partner) unless they coincide with a PGR's visit to York. Permission does *not* need to be obtained from PGRA for a TAP/progression meeting to be held by video-conferencing.

Research community

51. One of the benefits of undertaking a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD (in comparison to a distance learning PhD), is that the partner will normally be able to provide the PGR with a local research community. The department at York should, nevertheless, take steps to ensure that PGRs on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD feel part of the research community at York (see the Policy Framework for Distance Learning PGR Programmes). The individual (or overarching cohort) PGR agreement should specify any particular community-building actions for York or the partner, particularly if the research community at the partner is limited.

Training and development

52. PGRs on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD must complete any training that is mandatory at York, for example the Research Integrity Tutorial, and are expected to complete any recommended training, for example Becoming an Effective Researcher.
53. Research and transferable skills training and support for the professional development may be provided by the partner, by York (either when the PGR is present in York or by distance learning), or most likely by a combination of the two. Discussion about training needs (particularly where a department mandates particular courses/taught modules) should take place at an early stage, so that details of how these needs will be met (including the respective responsibilities of York and the partner) can be recorded in the individual (or overarching cohort) PGR agreement.
54. Departments should take proactive steps to make their departmental training accessible to, and appropriate for, PGRs on collaborative off-site or split-site PhD degrees. This might involve, for instance, facilitating remote participation in training sessions, modifying and recording training sessions for asynchronous consumption, or developing interactive online resources.

Access to facilities and resources

55. PGRs will have access to the facilities and resources of the partner as set out in the individual (or overarching cohort) agreement, and to the facilities and resources of York when in attendance or as a distance-learner.
56. PGRs on a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD should have the same access to departmental funding opportunities (e.g. conference funds) as PGRs on the equivalent campus-based PGR programme.

Examination

57. The examination process for a PGR undertaking a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD is the same as for a campus-based PhD. Collaborative off-site and split-site PhD PGRs may request an offsite, hybrid or online oral examination but if this is not approved by the Standing Committee on Assessment they must attend York for this purpose.
58. An academic from the partner may serve as the internal examiner for a PGR on the relevant collaborative off-site or split-site PhD if they hold an honorary appointment at York at an appropriate

level and meet the usual expectations in terms of academic expertise and lack of conflict of interest. When a partner academic is appointed to serve as an internal examiner, they should receive training and support from an experienced internal examiner in the relevant department at York and, in addition, an independent Chair from the relevant faculty should be appointed to oversee the examination process (see section 12 of the PoRD). An academic from the partner can never serve as an external examiner for the relevant collaborative off-site or split-site PhD.

Transfers

59. Where academically appropriate, subject to any UKVI restrictions (if applicable) and the resolution of any funding issues, and with the permission of the department, partner (where required) and PGR Special Cases, a collaborative off-site or split-site PhD PGR may transfer to the equivalent campus-based programme.

Teaching opportunities

60. Access to paid teaching opportunities at York for PGRs on collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs will be limited, and such opportunities will not be available to those who do not have the right to work in the UK and/or are based outside the UK. The Policy on Graduate Teaching Assistants would apply as normal (e.g. PGRs must meet the training requirements).
61. PGRs may undertake paid teaching work at the partner, if available, but this should be with the agreement of their supervisor(s) and funder, if applicable. The hours undertaken should be no more than would be permitted for a PGR on a campus-based PhD to ensure that their research project and work/life balance is not jeopardised.

PGR representation and engagement

62. PGRs on collaborative off-site and split-site PhDs should be included in departmental and University mechanisms for PGR representation and engagement, as per other PhD PGRs, acknowledging that reasonable adjustments may need to be made to facilitate their participation when located at the partner.

Complaints and appeals

63. Complaints relating to the partner should be raised, initially, directly with the partner but the PGR shall have the right to escalate any complaint to York if they cannot get satisfactory resolution. Appeals should always be directed to York.

Quality assurance

64. Departments should monitor the progress of, and outcomes for, collaborative off-site and split-site PhD PGRs. The effectiveness of collaborative off-site and split-site PhD programmes (with a particular focus on the research environment being provided by the partner) should be specifically considered as part of the Annual Review and Periodic Review processes. The University may also wish, on occasion, to conduct a more in-depth review of collaborative off-site and split-site PhD provision.
65. Ongoing relationships (and any associated memoranda of Understanding, overarching cohort agreements/partner-specific template individual PGR agreements) should be subject to regular review (normally on a five-year cycle) to ensure that the relationship is working well and that the partner continues to be in good standing and to offer an appropriate research environment.

Appendix 7: Policy Framework for Integrated PhD Programmes

Introduction

1. This is the University's policy framework for Integrated PhD programmes. It should be read in conjunction with the University's Policy on Research Degrees (PoRD) and with the University's Regulations for Research Degree Awards (Regulation 2). If there is any inconsistency between the PoRD and this framework, this framework should apply.

The nature and purpose of the Integrated PhD

2. An Integrated PhD programme at York combines taught modules at Master's level, enabling PGRs to broaden and/or deepen their knowledge in a specific area, with a substantive PhD research project. It differs from a standard three-year or four-year PhD programme at York with respect to the volume and timing of the taught element and the award of a Postgraduate Diploma alongside the PhD to successful PGRs.
3. The approval of an Integrated PhD may be of particular value:
 - for interdisciplinary areas of research, where applicants typically do not have the necessary breadth and/or depth of knowledge to start a research project with immediate effect
 - for departments which frequently receive applications from individuals who have funding for a PGR programme of four years in duration and a Master's degree in the subject area (and so for whom a 1+3 route is not an option) but where the Master's degree has not provided the depth and/or breadth of knowledge that would be required for an individual to start their research project with immediate effect
 - for departments which frequently receive applications from individuals who have a Master's degree in a cognate discipline (and so for whom a 1+3 route is unattractive) but who do not have the depth and/or breadth of knowledge, in the discipline in question, to start a research project with immediate effect (e.g. to facilitate a move from modern languages to linguistics).

Approval process

4. All Integrated PhD programmes should be approved for planning purposes, prior to approval of the academic case being sought from PGR Policies and Programmes Committee (PPPC). Standard home/international PhD fees apply.
5. Departments will need to ensure that full details of the integrated studies year of the Integrated PhD are supplied, as specified below. The taught element of the integrated studies year must be approved as set out in section 1 of the PoRD.
6. Minor exceptions to this framework may be agreed by the PPPC where there is a clear justification (e.g. to meet reasonable requirements from a funding body).

Programme details

Structure and duration

7. An Integrated PhD programme comprises:
 - a. an integrated studies component of one-year duration (or part-time equivalent), which includes a taught component leading to a named Postgraduate Diploma;
 - b. a PhD research project of three years duration (or part-time equivalent).
8. An Integrated PhD programme has a normal period of enrolment of four years full-time (eight years

part-time), with a minimum enrolment period of three years and nine months full-time (seven years and six months part-time) and a maximum period of enrolment of five years full-time (nine years part-time). PGRs on an Integrated PhD programme (iPhD PGRs) should plan their research so that they will submit within the normal period of enrolment. If iPhD PGRs exceed their normal period of enrolment they will enter into a continuation period (of up to one year) and be subject to the continuation period policies and procedures as set out in the PoRD (including payment of the continuation fee).

Leave of absence

9. Requests for leave of absence for iPhD PGRs will be dealt with according to the rules and processes for PGRs. If, however, an iPhD PGR needs to take a leave of absence during the taught element of the integrated studies component, then (depending on the duration and timing of the leave of absence) they may need to take a leave of absence for a full academic year in order to ensure that they receive all the required teaching and undertake all the required assessment for the taught element.

Naming convention and final award

10. An Integrated PhD programme should normally be described as PhD (Integrated) in XXXX (where XXXX is the title of the standard PhD programme that the Integrated PhD programme maps onto).
11. PGRs who successfully complete an Integrated PhD programme will be awarded a PhD in XXXX with an integrated Postgraduate Diploma in XXX (e.g. PhD in Economics with an integrated Postgraduate Diploma in Economic Research) (and will also be eligible to receive a transcript of module marks).
12. The named Postgraduate Diploma can also be awarded to iPhD PGRs who: (i) at the final examination, fail their PhD or are awarded an alternative qualification, or (ii) withdraw from the Integrated PhD programme, or have their enrolment terminated, having progressed to year two (or part-time equivalent).

Admission requirements and process

13. The academic admission requirements for an Integrated PhD programme are the same as for other PhD programmes, as set out in the University's [Admissions Policy](#) and should align with the department's standard academic admission requirements for a PhD i.e. including the requirement for a Master's degree at a suitable level of attainment if applicable.
14. The English language requirements for entry to an Integrated PhD programme are the same as for admission to a department's non-integrated PhD programmes.
15. Where applicable, prospective PGRs should be asked to submit an outline research proposal during the application process as, although a detailed research proposal can be developed during the integrated studies year, it is important to ensure, from the outset, that there is expertise (and capacity) to supervise the prospective iPhD PGR in their area of interest. Submission of an outline research proposal can also enable the most appropriate PGR supervisor to be allocated from the start of the Integrated PhD programme (if that is the approach that the department wishes to take).

Entry points and timing of arrival in York

16. Most Integrated PhD programmes will have a single-entry point aligned with the start of the first semester of each academic year in order to make use of existing Master's level taught modules. Integrated PhDs can be advertised as full-time only but have a part-time route after the first year available for transfer.
17. iPhD PGRs are expected to be present in York for all the teaching associated with the taught element. If an individual accepted onto an Integrated PhD programme is not able (e.g. due to visa issues) to arrive in York before the teaching associated with the taught element starts, then their place on the

programme must be deferred until the following academic year.

Recognition of prior learning

18. Given that the key purpose of an Integrated PhD programme is to ensure that PGRs receive a comprehensive package of training, iPhD PGRs are not eligible for any recognition of prior learning towards the taught element. If a department wishes to have flexibility to accommodate the differing academic backgrounds of incoming iPhD PGRs, they may achieve this by setting up a bespoke integrated PhD Diploma with appropriate option modules.

Information

19. All new iPhD PGRs should receive an iPhD handbook from their department.

PGR status

20. An iPhD PGR is treated as a PGR and subject to the rules of the PoRD from the outset of their programme, other than where specified in this framework. In their first year, they should, for example, attend induction events for new PGRs, complete BERT and the Research Integrity Tutorial, have access to PGR and GTA training opportunities (although it is strongly recommended that they do not undertake any GTA work during the taught element of the integrated studies year to avoid overload), and make use of PGR facilities and resources.

Design of the academic programme

Integrated studies year

21. The integrated studies component is one year in duration (or part-time equivalent) and should be completed (including any reassessment/resubmission opportunities) within the first year of enrolment (or part-time equivalent). Care must be taken to ensure that there is a reasonable spread of workload across the integrated studies year.
22. The integrated studies year should comprise: (i) a taught element, and (ii) a research element.

Taught element

23. The taught element is 120 credits of assessed taught modules, at least 90 credits of which should be at Master's level or above, with no credits below Honours level (NB modules at Honours level are taken on a pass/fail basis). The 120 credits of taught modules should be presented as a named Postgraduate Diploma, which is aligned with the York pedagogy and documented as a standard new postgraduate taught programme. A named Postgraduate Certificate lower exit award should be specified. All taught modules should be listed in the module catalogue.
24. The taught element may be an existing Postgraduate Diploma (i.e. available for existing PGT students as an entry, transfer or lower exit award) or a bespoke Postgraduate Diploma i.e. approved solely for delivery as part of an Integrated PhD programme.
25. The taught element may focus on research skills and methods training, or on specialist subject knowledge, or a mixture of both. The taught element may: (i) include tutorial modules i.e. which enable a PGR to study a particular subject in depth supported by tutorials with a named academic; (ii) include laboratory rotations if these are set up as taught modules, including an appropriate assessment regime (alternatively laboratory rotations may form part of the research element of the integrated studies year); and (iii) enable PGRs to choose, in consultation with their supervisor from defined sets of option modules (which may be from more than one department) to achieve a coherent collection of modules that are most appropriate to their individual circumstances.
26. A Postgraduate Diploma that is approved solely for delivery as part of an integrated PhD programme, may include up to 30 credits at Doctoral level (and exceptionally up to 60 credits at Doctoral level). PPPC

will expect a convincing academic rationale for the inclusion of Doctoral level credits. An associated Postgraduate Certificate lower exit award may include no more than 20 credits at Doctoral level.

27. The procedures for the assessment of the taught element are as set out for Postgraduate Diplomas in the Guide to Assessment, Standards, Marking and Feedback (unless otherwise specified in this framework). This includes the identification of an appropriate external examiner for the modules and Postgraduate Diploma if this is not already in place.
28. For full-time iPhD PGRs, it is expected that the taught element will be scheduled towards the start of the integrated studies year, so that an iPhD PGR can focus on the research element in the latter part of that year. With a semester one start date, the taught element should be completed by the end of the second semester at the latest. For part-time iPhD PGRs it is expected that the taught element would be scheduled in the first year.
29. When undertaking the taught element iPhD PGRs are:
 - a. monitored for attendance in the same way as taught students;
 - b. subject to taught policies in terms of exceptional circumstances and academic misconduct in taught modules; entitled to access the same learning support as taught postgraduate students.

Research element

30. The research element should comprise: (i) the development of a detailed research proposal for the PGR's PhD research OR a literature review, AND (ii) a small-scale research project (which may include one or more laboratory rotations) assessed by a written submission. The decision whether to require a research proposal or literature review will be taken by the relevant department (subject to PPPC approval when the iPhD is approved) depending on the nature of the discipline. The workload expectations for the research element must reflect the time available (allowing for a resubmission opportunity), Depending on the degree to which the research element runs alongside the taught element, it should equate to between 400-500 hours of notional learning.
31. The details of the assessment of the research element (i.e. including the relative weighting allocated to the research proposal/literature review and small-scale research project, and formats, word lengths, submission dates, re-submission dates and pass/fail assessment criteria for each task) must be specified for each iPhD by the relevant department (subject to PPPC approval when the iPhD is approved). In determining the assessment criteria for the research proposal/literature review and small-scale research project, the key issue is whether a PGR is able to demonstrate readiness for their PhD research project (see below for full details).
32. Departments should specify what tailored support they will provide for iPhD PGRs to help them with the research element. This should be provision separate to/in addition to that provided to postgraduate taught students for their dissertation – given the different aims of the research element of the integrated studies year.
33. As the research element does not form part of the Postgraduate Diploma, an iPhD PGR may incorporate work undertaken as part of the research element into their PhD thesis.

PhD research project

34. The duration of the PhD research project is three years (or part-time equivalent).
35. The format and word length of the PhD thesis should be the same as the equivalent non-Integrated PhD programme in the department.
36. The final examination for an Integrated PhD programme follows the rules set out for PhD programmes in the PoRD.

Supervision

37. Each iPhD PGR will have a PGR supervisor from the start of their Integrated PhD programme. There are two options:
- a. the PGR supervisor(s) is appointed at the start of the Integrated PhD programme;
 - b. a provisional PGR supervisor (who might be the nominated programme leader) is appointed at the start of the Integrated PhD programme, with the appointment of the confirmed PGR supervisor(s) by the end of the integrated studies year at the latest.
38. During the integrated studies year, iPhD PGRs should meet regularly with their supervisor (confirmed or provisional) including formal supervision meetings at least every 6-7 weeks as set out in the PoRD (although when they are undertaking the taught element they will not be expected to submit and receive feedback on written work at their formal supervision meetings).

Monitoring and progression

39. A Thesis Advisory Panel (TAP) should be appointed by the end of the integrated studies year at the latest and should meet as required by the PoRD from this point onwards (earlier, on an informal basis, if the department wishes).

Progression from the integrated studies year

40. Progression from year one to year two (or part-time equivalent) of an Integrated PhD programme is dependent on meeting two progression criteria:
- a. obtaining 120 credits from the taught element in accordance with the standard postgraduate taught programme rules of assessment (including the rules on compensation, reassessment and eligibility for merit or distinction). A department may make a case to PPPC for setting the threshold for progression above a pass e.g. that PGRs must obtain a merit or above but if so there must be a clear academic rationale (e.g. that this is the standard expected of PGRs progressing to a PhD from the department's own Master's programmes). If setting a progression threshold above a pass, any permitted exceptions to this rule (e.g. if a PGR produces an exceptional research proposal/literature review and project) must be clearly outlined from the outset (subject to PPPC approval when the iPhD is approved). If setting a progression threshold above a pass, PGRs who cannot meet this threshold but could still achieve a Postgraduate Diploma or Certificate through reassessment in accordance with the standard postgraduate taught programme rules should be permitted this opportunity;
 - b. passing the research proposal/literature review and small-scale research project. If a department wishes to specify a numerical mark (above a pass) for progression, then this must be on the basis of Masters entry equivalence. The research proposal/literature review and small-scale research project should be assessed by the PGR's PGR supervisor (or prospective PGR supervisor, if their appointment has not yet been confirmed) and the Graduate Chair or their nominee (who should not be a member of the PGR's supervisory team or Thesis Advisory Panel) against the approved pass/fail assessment criteria (see below) and a consensus reached. PGRs have one opportunity to resubmit their research proposal/literature review and/or small-scale research project if they do not meet the criteria at the first attempt.
41. iPhD PGRs who meet both progression criteria (i.e. (a) and (b)) will progress to the second year of the Integrated PhD programme. iPhD PGRs who do not meet both progression criteria will have their enrolment on the Integrated PhD programme terminated, but those who have met progression criterion (a) will receive the named Postgraduate Diploma as a lower exit award. If a PGR does not meet (a) or (b), they may still be eligible to receive the named Postgraduate Certificate as a lower exit award.

42. Progression from year one to year two of an Integrated PhD programme, including any resits of taught modules and/or resubmission of the research proposal/literature review and/or small-scale research project, must be completed by the end of the twelfth month following first enrolment (or part-time equivalent).

Progression post integrated studies year

43. Progression from year two to year three (or part-time equivalent) of an Integrated PhD programme follows the rules for the first formal review of progress for a standard three-year PhD programme as per Appendix 2 of the PoRD.
44. Progression from year three to year four (or part-time equivalent) of an Integrated PhD programme follows the rules for the second formal review of progress for a standard three-year PhD programme as per Appendix 2 of the PoRD.

PGR representation and engagement

45. iPhD PGRs should be included in departmental and University mechanisms for PGR representation and engagement, as per other PGRs.

Quality assurance

46. Departments should monitor the progress of, and outcomes for, iPhD PGRs. The effectiveness of Integrated PhD programmes should be specifically considered as part of the Annual Review and Periodic Review processes. The University may also wish, on occasion, to conduct a more in-depth review of Integrated PhD provision.

Management of Integrated PhD programmes

47. Each Integrated PhD programme (or suite of related programmes) should have a nominated programme leader who is responsible for overseeing the provision, particularly the integrated studies year. It may be appropriate for the programme leader to serve as a provisional supervisor for iPhD PGRs.

Eligibility for a taught Masters

48. The research element is not credit-rated and is not the equivalent of a Master's dissertation (either in terms of its notional workload nor in its nature - as it is focused on preparation for the PhD research project) meaning that iPhD PGRs who exit having completed the first year (or part-time equivalent) will not be eligible for a Master's degree but they may be able to apply to transfer to a taught Masters as an exceptional entry and with payment of additional fees.

Research element assessment details, including model pass/fail criteria

49. To progress from the integrated studies year, in addition to passing (or receiving the required mark in) the taught element, an iPhD PGR needs to achieve a pass in the research element:

- a research proposal OR a literature review

AND

- a small-scale research project.

50. Departments should specify:

- o whether iPhD PGRs should complete a research proposal OR a literature review (or whether this can be agreed on a case by case basis between the PGR and the supervisor);
- o what percentage of the notional 600 hours of the research element they are to devote to the research proposal/literature review vis-a-vis the small-scale research project, which, in turn, will help determine the format and word/page count for the research proposal/literature review vis-a-vis the project submission;

- o the pass/fail criteria for the research proposal/literature review and small-scale research project, utilising or drawing on the model criteria set out below.

51. Departments should also:

- clarify what support iPhD PGRs should receive from their supervisor (or others) to help them with the different parts of the research element. This should be provision separate to/in addition to that provided to taught postgraduate students for their dissertation – given the different aims of the research element of the integrated studies year;
- provide their iPhD PGRs with opportunities to receive formative feedback on one or more partial or full drafts of the research proposal/literature review and the project submission;
- ensure that there is a resubmission opportunity (before the end of the integrated studies year) for both the research/proposal/literature review and project submission to allow PGRs a second opportunity to meet the progression criteria set out below. The resubmission of the research proposal/literature review and/or project, must be completed by the end of the twelfth month following first enrolment (or part-time equivalent).

52. The pass/fail criteria for the research element of the iPhD should be based on the principle that they should enable a department to determine if an iPhD PGR (who has already been judged as suitable for admittance to a PhD programme) has demonstrated that they have the required research skills to progress to the PhD research project element of the iPhD (i.e. the equivalent of the start of year one of a standard three or four-year PhD).

53. The following are model criteria that can either be used as they are or adapted by departments (subject to PPPC approval alongside the approval of the iPhD).

Research proposal

The aim of the research proposal is to ensure that, where a PhD project is largely PGR-led, the PGR has developed a comprehensive, workable plan for initiating their PhD research, which should enable them to successfully complete within the normal period of enrolment.

To pass, a PGR's research proposal should demonstrate the following criteria:

- The research question and derived objectives are clear and appropriate in the context of the initiation of the PhD research
- Expected research outcomes are clearly articulated and should be achievable within the PhD timeframe and resource availability
- In approaching the research question, there is some evidence of the potential for original thought or creativity
- Key risks associated with the research have been identified and, ideally, some suggestions made as to how these might be mitigated
- A range of appropriate literature/sources are correctly cited
- Awareness of applicable research ethics.

Literature review

The aim of the literature review is to enable a PGR to demonstrate their understanding of key literature/sources relevant to their PhD project. The literature review should normally serve as the starting point for a PGR's introductory chapter within their PhD thesis.

To pass, a PGR's literature review should demonstrate the following criteria:

- Provides a comprehensive, critical analysis of relevant literature/sources
- Demonstrates an ability to successfully synthesise disparate literature/sources
- Draws on a wide range of appropriate literature/sources, many which have been identified by the PGR without input from the supervisor

- Features correctly cited literature/sources and considers the quality of the literature/sources.

Small scale research project

The aim of the small-scale research project is to ensure that PGRs have direct experience of some aspect of primary research relevant to their PhD project, and that the department can ascertain the PGR's aptitude in this area.

The choice of small-scale research project will vary considerably depending on the discipline (for example, it might be a trial of one or more laboratory techniques, the first analysis of an existing data set, an investigation into a limited number of items from a historical archive, a detailed textual analysis of a small number of primary sources) and its nature may be determined by the supervisor or by the PGR with guidance from the supervisor. The degree of supervisor guidance must be considered when assessing the project submission. In science subjects, the small-scale research project may include a number of laboratory rotations.

To pass, a PGR's project submission should meet the following criteria:

- Critical analysis of the context for the project
- Clear justification for the choice of research method(s)/approach to research and awareness of the limitations of the method(s)/approach (where applicable)
- Competent application of their chosen research method(s)/approach to research and/or a critical analysis of why problems have arisen and how they might be addressed in future
- Clearly presented results/outcomes
- Discussion of the results/outcomes that demonstrates a good level of critical analysis, including an ability to put the results/outcomes in the context of existing knowledge, and some evidence of the potential for original thought or creativity
- Practical and convincing recommendations for how the work might be taken forward
- A range of appropriate literature/sources, correctly cited
- Awareness of applicable research ethics.

Appendix 8: Policy and process for the appointment of examiners for research degrees

This policy is for PGRA, SCA and departments when considering the appointment of internal or external examiners for research degrees. This policy forms part of the [University Policy on Research Degrees](#).

Principle for the appointment of examiners of research degrees: all examiners must be independent, impartial, have no known conflict of interest and be of suitable professional standing.

Process for the appointment of examiners

1. The Recommendation of Examiners form is generated and made accessible to the PGR's department after the PGR has completed their Notification of Intention to Submit form prior to the submission of their thesis. Supervisors should contact their departmental Postgraduate Administrator regarding any queries/access issues with the form.
2. Departments should provide a CV for each external examiner nominated and provide a clear rationale for any exceptions to the norms set out below. It is recommended that any doubts about the perceived suitability of the external or internal examiner are referred to PGRA (pgr-administration@york.ac.uk) *before* the nomination form is completed.
3. Examiners are appointed by the SCA, acting on behalf of Senate, on the nomination of the relevant Graduate Chair. PGRA has delegated authority from the SCA to undertake examiner approval within certain set parameters (decisions are taken by the Student Administration Manager (PGRA) or their designated alternate or, if necessary, referred onwards to SCA).
4. PGRs should be informed of their prospective examiners and may query the decision but they do not have a veto on their appointment. If a PGR has concerns about the choice of examiner and this has not been resolved through discussion with their department they should flag this to SCA. The decision of SCA is final.
5. If necessary, e.g. as required by a funder/sponsor, external examiners may be required to sign a confidentiality agreement in accordance with [guidance from RKEC](#).
6. If an external examiner is a foreign national based outside the UK and they are planning to come to the UK to conduct the final examination then they may need to [obtain a visa and provide evidence for the border authorities](#).
7. If the external examiner is appointed who has limited experience of UK oral examinations, the department should ensure that the internal examiner is experienced and/or an independent chair appointed.
8. If an internal examiner is appointed who has not had previous experience of being a PGR examiner, then their department should allocate an experienced mentor (who is not the PGR's supervisor) to guide the internal through the process. Inexperienced internal examiners should also, and additionally, be offered the opportunity for the oral examination to be overseen by an independent chair.

Considerations in the appointment of external examiners

Professionalism

We require external examiners to be of suitable professional standing - i.e. to have appropriate levels of academic expertise and experience, and the capacity to command authority and the respect of their colleagues in their particular field - and to behave with professional responsibility. There are many forms that professional standing may take and these may vary by discipline.

An external examiner will normally be a senior member (Professor/Reader or equivalent) of the academic staff of another higher education institution or reputable research establishment in the United Kingdom or overseas. In some disciplines the nominee might be a senior academic member of a relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body. Recently retired academics may be appointed as external examiners but they should be able to demonstrate that they are aware of recent developments in their area of expertise and if more than three years have elapsed since retirement, evidence of continuing research activity or advanced scholarship must be provided as part of the nomination process.

The Graduate Chair should provide a clear rationale for their choice of nominee, explaining their circumstances and how they meet the professionalism criterion, if:

- the nominee is a more junior academic
- queries might be raised about any institution/organisation the nominee is affiliated to (e.g. if the academic standing of the institution/organisation is likely to be unknown or could be questioned)
- the professional standing of a nominee is not obvious, particularly if they have no obvious academic affiliation, e.g. they are an independent scholar or freelancer, or work in industry

Independence

Independence is normally established by the external examiner being a current academic employee, on a substantial contract, of another university and by their not having been a recent student, PGR or employee of the University of York (a minimum of three years should normally have elapsed since they were a student/PGR/employee at York). Those soon to be employees of the University of York should also be excluded. There must be no connection to the University of York that could suggest that they might feel compelled to make any particular decision.

Impartiality

Impartiality requires there to be no familial or personal relationship between the external examiner and anyone else involved in the process: PGR, supervisor, internal examiner, Graduate Chair (or whoever signs off the recommendation at departmental level) or anyone else involved in making a decision in the examination process.

It is a feature of academia that people are often required to make impartial academic judgments about someone with whom they have some level of professional relationship (eg when writing references, grading REF submissions, promotions panels etc.) so we should not assume that any existing professional relationship inhibits impartiality.

Conflicts of interest

Some of the questions on the appointment of examiners form are there to ensure that there is no potential conflict of interest. The form asks the external to declare any potential conflicts of interest.

For an external examiner, conflicts of interest arise when the examiner could have a personal 'stake' in the outcome. This could be, for example, through too strong a connection with the PGR, or the PGR's work or with the work of the supervisor, internal examiner or other staff closely involved in the specific area of the PGRs of work.

The following are conflicts of interest and should be avoided at all costs:

- the external has collaboration or co-authorship with the PGR
- the external has collaboration or co-authorship with the supervisor or internal examiner on topics related to the PGR's research

- the supervisor or internal examiner has recently (within the last six months) examined, or will imminently examine (within the next six months), a PGR in the external's department
- there exists a formal relationship between the external and the department which might have meant working with the PGR (eg honorary visiting professor in same research group)
- the external will supervise the PGR at postdoctoral level and/or has recently been on a hiring committee for the PGR.

The following might present conflict of interest and are to be avoided if possible:

- the external has an academic relationship with the supervisor or internal examiner, such as co-authorship or collaboration or sitting on the same funding committee, on topics that are not in any way related to the PGR's research
- the external has an academic relationship to the department, but this does not involve the PGR as a researcher in any way (eg lapsed or purely honorary Honorary Visiting Professor or regular visits to give lectures)
- the external was the supervisor's supervisor or the supervisor's supervisee
- the external recently supervised (within the last three years) the PGR's dissertation or thesis at another institution as part of a previous taught or research programme.

The following examples would not constitute conflicts of interest **as long as a period of at least three years has elapsed since the end of the potential conflict of interest:**

- the external was the PGR supervisor's PhD examiner
- the external was examined in their PhD by the PGR's supervisor
- the external examiner examined the PGR in another research programme, e.g. Masters by Research
- the external was supervising PGRs at York in the PGR's department (e.g. legacy supervision following employment at York or as part of a cross-institutional consortium)
- the external was a co-supervisor with the PGR's main supervisor at an institution other than York.

The following examples would not constitute conflicts of interest:

- the external has met the PGR at conferences
- the external knows the supervisor but no collaboration or co-authorship
- the external knows the internal but no collaboration or co-authorship
- the external is a member of the same professional association or body as the supervisor or internal examiner
- the external examiner is also an examiner for a taught degree programme in the department
- the external examiner examined the PGR in a taught programme.

With the permission of SCA, the co-authoring exclusion may be set aside where the coauthoring stems from a very large multinational team with multiple coauthors and the contact between the affected parties is actually limited. In exceptional circumstances only, with the permission of SCA, the collaboration/co-authoring exclusion (external examiner has collaborated/co-authored with the supervisor or internal examiner but not the PGR on topics related to the PGR's research) may be set aside in instances where the field is small and there are very few people with the relevant expertise.

Numbers of candidates examined

The same external examiner may be appointed to examine no more than two PGR candidates in the same department in any 12-month period, and no more than four PGR candidates in the same department in any 36-month period. Exceptionally, SCA may grant a time-limited exception to the rule governing the number of candidates examined by an external examiner in a particular time frame.

Considerations in the appointment of internal examiners

Eligibility

An internal examiner will normally be a member of the University's Academic, Research or Teaching staff, other than the candidate's supervisor(s).

Retired members of the University's Academic, Research or Teaching staff may be engaged to be internal examiners (at the external examiner rate) where this is academically justified and where support can be provided to ensure that the examination is conducted in accordance with current University rules. If more than three years have elapsed since the proposed internal examiner retired, evidence of continuing research activity or advanced scholarship must be provided as part of the nomination process, and an independent chair must be appointed.

A current or former member of the PGR's TAP (other than the supervisor(s)) or a PGR's progression panel may be appointed as an internal examiner, providing that the conditions set out below are met.

Although a member of University staff, and likely appointed from within the PGR's wider research grouping in the PGR's department, the internal examiner must be able to make an independent academic judgement on the candidate's thesis. If the nominated internal does not feel able to do so, for any reason, they must recuse themselves from the examination process.

The same principles of impartiality and conflicts of interest that apply to the appointment of external examiners also apply in relation to appointment of internal examiners. There should be no circumstances in which the internal examiner has a personal or professional interest in the outcome of the examination. Thus:

- There should be no familial or personal relationship (see the [University Policy on Personal Relationships](#)) between the internal examiner and anyone else involved in the examination process: PGR, supervisor, internal examiner, Graduate Chair (or whoever signs off the recommendation at departmental level) or anyone else involved in making a decision in the examination process.
- An internal examiner should not have had co-authoring or collaborative involvement in the PGR's current research project, and their work should not be the focus of the PGR's thesis.
- An internal examiner should not have served as an official or unofficial supervisor to the PGR concerned and should not have advised on the final drafting of the PGR's thesis.

Appendix 9: Guidance for Examiners on Degree Outcomes

The thesis has satisfied the criteria for the intended award (as set out in section 2 of the PoRD)	
No corrections	The thesis can be deposited without any changes.
Three-month corrections	<p>This option should be used for minor corrections i.e. corrections which are matters of detail and/or simple to address and can comfortably be completed within three months or less.</p> <p>This option might include editorial changes such as resolving grammatical or typographic errors or presentational issues, and correcting references. It might also include adding/removing/rewriting shorter sections of text to improve clarity.</p> <p>Examiners must be aware that once a candidate has submitted the final version of their corrected thesis by the specified deadline, no further revisions can be made. To avoid jeopardy for the candidate, therefore, it is vital that examiners ensure that required changes are academically straightforward and/or that they give the candidate very clear directions about the required changes and/or that they recommend that the candidate should consult with the internal examiner about the direction or appropriateness of changes made well in advance of the deadline for the submission of the corrected thesis.</p>
Six-month corrections	<p>This option should be used for major corrections i.e. corrections which require more time and/or are more complex to address than three-month corrections but can comfortably be completed within six months or less.</p> <p>This option might include adding/rewriting longer sections of text to improve clarity/strengthen an argument and/or undertaking some limited re-analysis/re-interpretation of existing data.</p> <p>This option can also be used if it is clear that the PGR has other commitments (such as full-time work) such that completing minor corrections within three months could be difficult.</p> <p>Examiners must be aware that once a candidate has submitted the final version of their corrected thesis by the specified deadline, no further revisions can be made. To avoid jeopardy for the candidate, therefore, it is vital that examiners ensure that required changes are academically straightforward and/or that they give the candidate very clear directions about the required changes and/or that they recommend that the candidate should consult with the internal examiner about the direction or appropriateness of changes made well in advance of the deadline for the submission of the corrected thesis.</p>
MA/MSc (by research): there are no minor/corrections options for the MA/MSc (by research) - all corrections should be able to be completed within two months.	
<p>The thesis has not yet satisfied the criteria for the intended award (as set out in section 2 of the PoRD) but there is <i>genuine</i> potential for it to do so after further work that is achievable within the designated timeframe for revision and resubmission</p> <p>A re-examination, including an oral examination, is required to determine if the criteria for the intended award have been met</p>	
Revise and resubmit within 12 months (four months for MA/MSc (by	<p>A revise and resubmit outcome IS NOT A FAIL but indicates there are concerns about the intellectual basis of the thesis, such that a substantive re-working or re-interpretation of content is required.</p> <p>This option might involve the candidate being required to re-write several thesis chapters</p>

research))	<p>and/or undertake a substantial re-analysis and/or re-interpretation of existing data.</p> <p>This option might also include a requirement for data generation/collection but this should be limited and achievable within the timeframe and available resources.</p> <p>This option should only be used where there is clear evidence in the thesis as it stands (and/or from the oral examination, where applicable) of the potential to meet the criteria for the intended award - including sufficient evidence of original work in the case of a PhD/MPhil - AND the further work required could realistically be completed within 12 months (or 4 months for an MA/MSc (by research)).</p>
<p>The thesis has not satisfied the criteria for the intended award (as set out in section 2 of the PoRD) and does not have the potential to do within the designated timeframe for revision and resubmission</p>	
Lower award without corrections	This option should be used where the thesis meets the criteria for a lower award with no changes required.
Lower award with corrections	This option should be used where the thesis meets the criteria for a lower award with corrections.
Failure	This option should be used where the thesis does not meet the criteria for a lower award or no lower award is available.

Appendix 10: Policy on Transparency of Authorship in PGR Programmes, including generative AI, proofreading and translation

This policy should be read alongside **The Policy on Research Degrees, section 12 and Appendix 3.**

1. Key Principles

- 1.1. PGRs are responsible for the authorship and standard of work they submit as part of their PGR programmes.
- 1.2. Work submitted by a PGR as part of their PGR programme must be their own, unless it is work that has been undertaken collaboratively and this is declared in accordance with [University expectations](#).
- 1.3. Text submitted by a PGR as their own work, as part of their PGR programme, must be produced in English without translation (unless this is subject to an agreed exception e.g. if the PGR is undertaking a translation-based programme). Note that the main text of the thesis (or equivalent) must be in English unless an exception is granted, pre-submission, by SCA and YGRS on the request of the relevant departmental Graduate School Board.
- 1.4. PGRs are expected to be transparent about the sources of information used via [referencing](#), and any assistance (human and/or technological) that they have received in producing work submitted as part of their PGR programme in the form of acknowledgements.
- 1.5. There are clearly defined limits to the extent of the assistance (human and/or technological) that may be provided by a third party to a PGR in the production of work submitted as part of their PGR programme.
- 1.6. PGRs who do not adhere to these principles may be in danger of committing academic or research misconduct as set out in the PGR Academic Misconduct Policy.

2. Scope of this policy

- 2.1. This policy applies to work submitted by a PGR e.g. reports, chapter drafts, presentations, papers, the thesis etc, rather than the underlying research (which will be covered by a separate policy).
- 2.2. This policy applies to work submitted by a PGR in any formal assessment in their programme, including, but not limited to, formal reviews of progress, the thesis and the oral examination (but excluding credit-bearing taught modules - see below).
- 2.3. It is vital that supervisors are able to gain a realistic assessment of a PGR's skill set in order to support them throughout their programme (e.g. where necessary to recommend English language or academic writing support) and ensure that they are suitably prepared to produce a thesis that meets the required standard. For this reason, this policy also applies to work for PGR programmes that is mandated or expected and submitted for scrutiny but not formally assessed (for example, work (including PDPs) submitted to supervisory and TAP meetings, work submitted as part of non-credit-bearing courses and training events (e.g. critiques of other PGRs' work), and posters or papers for seminars or conferences).
- 2.4. When a PGR is undertaking a credit-bearing taught module that forms part of their PGR programme, any work submitted for those modules will fall under the *Policy on Acceptable Assistance with Assessments (including Generative AI, Proofreading and Translation)*.

- 2.5. In certain disciplines (e.g. linguistics, modern languages, ancient languages), the accurate use of language may form part of the expectations for the final assessment, and/or during the programme it may be necessary to ascertain a PGR's language abilities in order to assess their development needs or fulfil an element of a non-credit-bearing course or training event. In this case, a department may specify (subject to PPPC approval) further restrictions on permitted support, for example that in a particular piece of work *no* proofreading or editing assistance is permitted.

3. Assistance from the supervisory team and other staff members

- 3.1. It is expected that the supervisory team and other staff members connected to a particular PGR and their project (e.g. TAP members, the Graduate Chair) will read and comment on a PGR's work, including drafts of the thesis.
- 3.2. Supervisors and other staff members should ensure that they are aware of the boundaries set out below in terms of acceptable and unacceptable assistance. The emphasis should be on making qualitative judgements about a PGR's work and identifying issues (for example in relation to structure and style) for the PGR to consider and address. Supervisors should refrain from routine proofreading, editing or translation of PGR work, other than as required to demonstrate to a PGR where they need to direct their attention in future.
- 3.3. Where supervisors and other staff members are concerned about the standard of work submitted by a PGR they should point the individual to sources of support, such as the Writing Centre.
- 3.4. PGRs should acknowledge the role played by their supervisors or other staff members in their thesis (see below).

4. Assistance from third parties

- 4.1. Some PGRs may want to seek assistance from a third party to help them improve work submitted as part of their PGR programme. This may be because a PGR feels that additional scrutiny will help pick up issues they have missed, or because they feel that they would benefit from some additional support, for example because they have limited experience of academic writing, or are a non-native speaker of English, or have specific learning difficulties.
- 4.2. The University recognises this need and this policy does not aim to prohibit a PGR from receiving third party assistance with work submitted as part of their PGR programme. Rather, the aim is to ensure that there are clearly defined limits to, and transparency about, the assistance received. These safeguards are necessary to ensure that the standard of the awards is maintained, and all PGRs are treated fairly.
- 4.3. Third party assistance may take the form of:
- 4.3.1. **Institutional advice and assistance:** Support from an institutional service such as the Writing Centre (see below);
 - 4.3.2. **Informal assistance:** Support from peers (see below), friends or family: checking a PGR's work, providing an audience's reaction, commenting on drafts, proofreading etc. in order to improve the work;
 - 4.3.3. **Language-enhancement applications:** Applications such as Grammarly, Pro Writing Aid and integrated spelling and grammar checkers can highlight issues and offer

suggestions for improvements in various areas of writing, e.g. with grammatical errors, alternative vocabulary and sentence rephrasing;

- 4.3.4. **Generative AI:** Artificial intelligence tools (e.g. ChatGPT) which can understand and respond to human natural language and multimedia input and can provide a wide range of services;
- 4.3.5. **Translation tools or services:** The process of translating text from one language to another: this could be human translation and/or using machine translation tools (e.g. Google translate);
- 4.3.6. **Professional proofreader:** An external, paid person or company employed by the PGR to proofread their work prior to submission.

5. Institutional advice and assistance

- 5.1. PGRs may seek assistance from institutional services such as the [Maths Skills Centre](#), [Writing Centre](#), and [Academic Liaison Librarians](#).
- 5.2. PGRs with a formal diagnosis of relevant disabilities may be entitled to more extensive assistance and should consult [Disability Services](#) about this.
- 5.3. Use of these institutional services does not require acknowledgement but they are subject to the constraints of this policy unless an exception is agreed in a Student Support Plan and signed off by SCA.

6. Peer support

- 6.1. Peer support under this policy refers to unpaid assistance provided to a PGR by a fellow PGR, for example commenting on a draft or proofreading. Peer support can be of immense value to both parties, providing a new perspective for the PGR whose work is being reviewed and a source of learning for the PGR undertaking the review.
- 6.2. Peer support should be acknowledged (see below) and PGRs should be aware that if they provide assistance to another PGR beyond that permitted under this policy, they themselves may be committing academic misconduct.

7. Permissible proofreading and editing assistance

- 7.1. Proofreading is defined by the [Chartered Institute of Editing and Proofreading](#) as: *a process of identifying typographical, linguistic, coding or positional errors and omissions on a printed or electronic proof, and marking corrections.*
- 7.2. It is permissible for a PGR, with the appropriate acknowledgement (see below), to use a third party to identify and correct errors related to:
 - 7.2.1. Word usage (excluding specific terminology);
 - 7.2.2. Spelling, punctuation, capitalisation, italics, abbreviations, headings, quotations, metrification, numbering, citations, referencing, tables, illustrations, footnotes and appendices (typographical errors).
- 7.3. In addition, it is permissible for a PGR, with the appropriate acknowledgement (see below) to use a third party to identify (but **not** correct) issues relating to :
 - 7.3.1. Grammar and syntax;
 - 7.3.2. Clarity of expression;

- 7.3.3. Voice and tone;
 - 7.3.4. Issues with logical sequencing and linkage between sentences and paragraphs;
 - 7.3.5. Ambiguity;
 - 7.3.6. Repetition.
- 7.4. Where identification but not correction by a third party (human or software) is appropriate, PGRs should correct these issues themselves following feedback. In the case of language enhancement tools, the software usually provides feedback in the form of suggested edits for the author to choose - the selection of these options is permissible and subject to the judgement of the PGR.

8. Unacceptable assistance

- 8.1. It is **not appropriate** for a PGR to seek or accept, or a third party to offer, editing and proofreading assistance for work submitted as part of their PGR programme that alters the academic content, including:
- 8.1.1. Using generative AI tools in a way which could be considered false authorship or which raises concerns about the security of research data;
 - 8.1.2. Using translation tools or services to translate text in whole or significant sections (oral or written), which is then submitted as the PGR's own work;
 - 8.1.3. Generating or re-writing (including shortening or summarising) any of the PGR's sentences or sections of work;
 - 8.1.4. Rearranging or paraphrasing passages of text, sequences of code or sections of other material for the PGR;
 - 8.1.5. Reformatting the material for the PGR;
 - 8.1.6. Generating or contributing additional material to the original;
 - 8.1.7. Generating or checking calculations or formulae;
 - 8.1.8. Generating or rewriting formulae, equations or computer code;
 - 8.1.9. Generating, labelling or relabelling figures or diagrams.

9. Acknowledgement of proofreading or editing assistance

- 9.1. If a PGR uses the spelling and grammar checking tools which are integrated into MS Word or Google Docs (or equivalent) as standard, then no acknowledgment is required.
- 9.2. If a PGR receives third party assistance with proofreading or editing, whether paid or not, this must be declared when the work is submitted.
- 9.3. Work submitted for TAP meetings, formal reviews of progress and the final examination, must include a formal acknowledgement of proofreading or editing, either at the beginning of the document or (if applicable) after the reference list.
- 9.3.1. The formal acknowledgement should explain the type of assistance provided to the PGR, who or what provided that assistance (but not naming individuals), and a statement that the assistance has been in accordance with this policy.
 - 9.3.2. A suitable format for a formal acknowledgement is as follows:

I acknowledge that I received assistance from (eg professional proofreader/family member/friend/ChatGPT/Grammarly) to proofread this TAP report/progression report/thesis in line with the *Policy on Transparency in Authorship in PGR Programmes*.

- 9.4. Other work submitted by PGRs as part of their PhD programmes must include a suitable acknowledgement appropriate to the nature of the task (for example, if submitting a document to a supervisor any assistance could be noted verbally).

10. Acknowledgement of collaborative writing in a journal-style thesis

- 10.1. If a PGR is submitting a journal-style thesis they may include papers (or the disciplinary equivalent) that have been co-authored. In this case, the PGR should follow the [guidance on authorship in a journal-style thesis](#).

11. Using a proofreader

- 11.1. **Advice of the supervisor(s):** A PGR should seek advice from their supervisor(s) before using a proofreader. The supervisor may be able to provide reassurance that a proofreader is not required and/or suggest other forms of support (e.g. the Writing Centre).
- 11.2. **University guidelines and department requirements:** The PGR must provide the proofreader with a copy of this policy and ensure that the proofreader accepts the conditions included in them in writing. The PGR should also provide the proofreader with their department's specific reference formats and other appropriate writing guidelines.
- 11.3. **Contract and payment for professional proofreaders:** The PGR bears the sole responsibility for the recruitment and cost of services rendered by a professional proofreader, therefore PGRs are advised to check the proofreader's credentials, agree on a payment rate, overall cost and timescale before the procedure begins. The contract is a private matter between the PGR and the proofreader.
- 11.4. **Proving the extent of the proofreading:** In order to be able to prove the extent/limits of the proofreading, the PGR must keep a copy of the edited/corrected work, showing the changes that have been made. This copy may then be produced should any challenge arise concerning the degree of guidance given. This copy must be kept until the PGR's degree has been conferred in case the PGR is accused of academic misconduct.
- 11.5. **PGR responsibility:** Responsibility for submitted work lies completely with the PGR. Inaccurate or inappropriate proofreading will not constitute grounds for an appeal, complaint, or mitigating circumstances (in the case of an accusation of academic misconduct). It is up to the PGR to accept, ignore or challenge the advice and corrections suggested by a proofreader. PGRs will not be granted extensions due to a need, real or perceived, to employ a proofreader or any delays in proofreading.

Appendix 11: Policy on Granting PGR Programme Extensions in Exceptional Circumstances

The purpose of this policy is to guide PGR Special Cases when taking decisions about exceptional circumstances, primarily in relation to PGR programme extension requests, to ensure equity and maintain academic standards. The policy also provides transparency for PGRs who might need to make an exceptional circumstances request.

In all cases, PGRs applying under this policy will be required to provide supporting evidence for the case that they are making and to follow the set [procedure](#).

Programme extension requests

The University of York expects that PGR programmes will be completed and submitted with the normal period of enrolment and PGRs - supported by their supervisors and departments - must plan their programme in its entirety (i.e. including preparatory work, research and writing of the thesis, any training or other required activities (e.g. compulsory placements) plus an allowance for contingencies) based on this expectation.

Extensions to a submission deadline are, therefore, granted only in exceptional circumstances, where a PGR's work has been **significantly adversely impaired by severe (serious and of sufficient duration), unforeseen, and unavoidable issues**, normally of a medical or personal nature.

A request for an extension **may** be refused where a PGR was advised to take a Leave of Absence during their programme to deal with an issue, but opted not to do so.

Retrospective requests will not be considered unless there are exceptional, documented circumstances (for example the PGR was medically incapacitated) that prevented the PGR from requesting an extension at the current time.

Progression Extensions and Leave of Absence requests

This policy may also be used to guide PGR Special Cases when considering progression extensions (particularly over 2 months), and Leave of Absence requests that are lengthy and/or where multiple requests have already been made by a PGR.

Circumstances that are exceptional and may be grounds for an extension

The University recognises that serious life events may impact on a PGR's ability to make progress and/or complete on time; such circumstances include:

- Serious medical situations eg hospitalisation or incapacitation through injury, illness, or mental health crisis
- Close bereavement eg of a partner, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, or grandchild. Housemates or very close friends may also be considered 'close', though evidence of the relationship may be required
- Victim of a serious crime with ongoing physical and/or mental impact
- Disabilities for which reasonable adjustments are not yet in place and where this delay is not due to the PGR
- Difficult personal or domestic circumstances, for example the serious illness of a dependent
- Severe impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (for example on mental health, caring responsibilities, interaction with existing disability).

Circumstances that are not normally exceptional and not normally grounds for an extension

The following *may* provide grounds for an extension but a PGR will need to clearly demonstrate that the circumstances meet the criteria set out above i.e. severe, unforeseen, and unavoidable:

- Relationship breakdown
- Disabilities for which reasonable adjustments have been made
- Constraints arising from paid employment
- Significant legal proceedings requiring attendance
- Inability to access vital research equipment e.g. due to fire or flood
- Immediate loss of accommodation e.g. due to eviction, fire or flood
- Loss of a supervisor when this is not resolved as per the Policy on Research Degrees.

Circumstances that do not provide grounds for an extension

PGR programmes are, by their nature, challenging and require resilience. The University expects that PGRs will develop strategies, and access support services where necessary, to help them manage day to day difficulties in their work and personal lives.

PGRs are expected to plan their research to fit within their normal period of enrolment. PGRs are also expected to recognise that research does not always go to plan and therefore to identify, from the outset, possible challenges that might cause delay (e.g. experiments not working, difficulties in accessing equipment, poor weather in field seasons etc.) and to build in contingency time to accommodate this (whether or not their PGR programme includes a continuation period).

The following will not be considered grounds for an extension:

- Previous poor academic progress or lack of engagement
- Pressure of academic work
- Lack of contingency planning in relation to the research project
- Undertaking further research and/or other research-related activities (e.g. writing papers, conference attendance)
- Teaching commitments
- Inadequate planning and time management, e.g. failure to allow sufficient time for a supervisor to consider the final draft of the thesis prior to the deadline, or for a funder to approve a final draft of the thesis
- Time needed to improve the standard of written English in the thesis and/or to proofread the thesis (including where a PGR has English as a second language)
- Computer or equipment failure, including where this has resulted in a loss of work, where use of an alternative is possible or the loss of work was avoidable
- Making arrangements for the oral examination
- Where the PGR is registered for more than one degree (requires approval) and the request is based on commitments relating to the other degree
- Preparation for paid employment including job interviews
- Normal pressures of paid employment
- Getting married, going on honeymoon, or attending a wedding or similar
- Holidays
- Participation in sport or other hobbies, even at a high level
- Moving house
- Illness or death of pets
- Childcare or other ongoing caring issues
- Financial difficulties, including lack of funds to complete the degree
- Planned medical procedures
- Need to travel abroad for medical checkups or planned procedures
- To obtain or renew a visa
- Where a PGR has made a complaint against the University and is awaiting an outcome

- Lack of awareness of the correct policy and application procedures for requesting an extension.

Evidence

The PGR Special Cases process is an evidence based process. Requests, especially for extensions, are rarely upheld without robust supporting evidence.

PGRs are responsible for obtaining the necessary evidence. PGRs will not be chased for evidence if they fail to provide it. If a PGR does not provide evidence with their request and does not explain why, the request will be rejected.

The evidence submitted in support of a request to PGR Special Cases should:

- i. Be from an independent and relevantly-qualified third party source/professional.
- ii. Give direct confirmation of the PGR's circumstances and the impact on the PGR's ability to undertake their research/produce their thesis or otherwise engage with their PGR programme.
- iii. Indicate the period of disruption and duration of impact.
- iv. Be contemporaneous to the disruption. A doctor or counsellor, for example, may be willing to report a retrospective account given to them by a PGR after the event, but in itself this does not carry weight as evidence.
- v. In the event that the professional concerned did not see the PGR during the time period in question, but believes that their condition would have prevented them from engaging not only with their research/thesis/PGR programme, but also with professional support services, evidence can still be considered. The professional's evidence in such a case would need to explain the extent to which the circumstances would have prevented engagement with professional services.
- vi. If the PGR is asking for a decision retrospectively, the evidence submitted must also explain why the PGR was unable to engage with the PGR Special Cases process at the time. In some cases, where the circumstances are sufficiently severe, it may be possible to infer good reason from the evidence submitted.
- vii. Evidence must be provided in English or, where the original evidence is in a different language, with a translation by an independent professional third party into English. Translations by students will not be accepted.