

University of Wales
Code of Practice for Professional Doctorates
7th Edition

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1. Introduction

The Professional Doctorates to which this Code of Practice applies are individual programmes at doctoral level, validated by the University of Wales and designed in accordance with that institution's Regulations for Professional Doctorates and this Code of Practice. They are awarded in recognition of the successful completion of Parts One and Two of an approved programme. Part One comprises a taught course, Part Two further study and research, the results of which are judged to constitute an original contribution to learning and to give evidence of systematic study and of ability to relate the results of such study to the general body of knowledge in the subject.

This Code of Practice sets out the policy of the University of Wales [hereafter '**the University**'] on matters of good practice related to Professional Doctorates that are within the remit of the Degrees and Academic Awards Board. It applies to accredited and affiliated institutions [hereafter referred to as institutions] and to collaborative and other approved centres [hereafter referred to as 'centres'].

It is intended to provide information useful to members of academic staff, research students, administrators and members of examining boards. It elaborates on the framework for the management of doctoral programmes provided by the Common Academic Regulations for Professional Doctorates at Collaborative Centres.

The Code of Practice aims to ensure that:

- i. the academic standards of the University are maintained, and
- ii. postgraduate research students have a fair and reasonable opportunity to achieve the full potential of their research.

The Code of Practice lays down administrative rules which should be treated as having regulatory authority subordinate to the Regulations.

The exception is Appendix 3 *The University of Wales' expectations on supervision following an initial examination*. This sets out the University's expectations on supervision following an initial viva, but the stipulations within the appendix do not carry regulatory authority.

The code was initially drawn up after consulting various documents published externally, and has been kept under development by referencing wider developments and published work within the Higher Education sector as a whole, including:

- relevant *chapters of the QAA Quality Code*;
- QAA Doctoral Degree Characteristic (2011; Draft Consultation Document 2014);
- HEFCE October 2002 report "Improving standards in research degrees programmes";
- NPC Guidelines on Codes of Practice for Research;
- SET for Success (2003);
- Credit and Qualifications Framework for Wales;
- NQA Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance;
- UK Council for Graduate Education;
- UK Research Councils;
- Universities UK ;

- Vitae.

This document should be read in conjunction with:

- University of Wales Regulations;
- Institutional Programme Handbook (see section 3);

Note: Every effort has been made to ensure consistency between the different documents produced by the University of Wales for the management of Professional Doctorates. However, where there appears to be a conflict between the guidance or regulations contained in these documents, the University of Wales Regulations for Professional Doctorates at Collaborative Centres take precedence over all other documents, including this Code of Practice. This code takes precedence over programme handbooks.

2. Regulations

The University of Wales' Regulations [hereafter 'the Regulations'] are available to all staff and research students via the website. They can also be obtained upon request from the Academic Registry of each centre [hereafter the term 'Academic Registry' should be taken to mean the Academic Registry or its equivalent in the centre where the student is enrolled].

The Regulations set out:

- the qualifications required for entry to Professional Doctorates, as well as qualifications or experience that may give exemption from part of the programme;
- the requirements for progression, monitoring and review of required periods of study;
- examination rules and procedures.

3. The programme handbook

A programme handbook must be available in both hardcopy and electronically and will include as a minimum:

- overall aims and objectives of the programme;
- admissions requirements;
- module specifications to the normal standards of the University for each component of Part One;
- detail of the requirement for progression from Part One to Part Two
- detail of the assessment requirements for Part Two;
- information to support students undertaking Part Two.

4. The research environment

During the consultation process with applicants prior to entry, centres should ensure that there is adequate expertise available to provide supervisory support for the broad area to be pursued in Part Two within a research-active environment and that appropriate training is available to support **the candidate's specialist needs**.

In many cases taught programme assessments and/or the research element of a Professional **Doctorate are rooted in the candidate's employment and centres should** ensure that the employer is willing both to provide access to relevant data and to permit its use.

Care should be taken to ensure that potential students are not isolated within their own project and that they have contact with other researchers both from within and outside the University of Wales so that they can share experiences and form networks.

Generally there should be:

- opportunities to link with the wider professional community through, for example, conference and seminar attendance;
- ready access to academic colleagues for advice and support;
- availability of adequate learning and research tools;
- the opportunity to develop peer support networks where issues or problems can be discussed informally;
- guidance on research ethics and good practice;
- an emphasis on the need to complete the research project within an agreed time-frame.

5. Selection and admission

It is the responsibility of Research Degrees Committees at centres to ensure that only suitably qualified candidates are recommended to the Degrees and Academic Awards Board for admission to study for a Professional Doctorate.

In the case of candidates whose first language is not English or Welsh, this includes **ensuring that candidates will meet the University of Wales' English or Welsh language requirements**.

It is important for candidates to undertake a specified student induction programme at the start of their doctoral programme.

5.1 Publicity

Centres should ensure that their promotional material, whether web-based or paper-based, is clear, accurate and up-to-date, and of sufficient detail to be helpful and informative to potential candidates about the level of activity and focus of the programme. All publicity material must be approved by the University of Wales before distribution.

5.2 Selection

The centre's Research Degrees Committee is responsible for ensuring that all applicants for study have been fully and fairly considered in the light of legal requirements and the applicable policies on equality and diversity. Where candidates have special needs, these should be identified and dealt with satisfactorily before an offer is made.

Research Degrees Committees should have in place an admissions system for Professional Doctorate candidates which ensures that applications are considered fairly. All candidates should be interviewed either in person or by telephone or video link.

5.3 Entry requirements and procedures

Generally, the University expects that candidates seeking admittance to a Professional Doctorate programme possess an honours degree from a recognised Higher Education Institution, with a classification of 2:1 or above, or **a master's degree, or a qualification** deemed by the University of Wales to be equivalent to this level.

Where candidates do not meet these requirements the Research Degrees Committee must make a case to the Degrees and Academic Awards Board demonstrating that the candidate has equivalent academic ability, for example, that they have acquired the requisite skills, knowledge and training from their professional work.

It is therefore important that, in reaching its decision, the Research Degrees Committee documents the **features of candidates' professional work that evidence the acquisition of** such skills. For example, the work may use the academic skills developed during an undergraduate degree in a way which develops independent critical assessment of evidence, or formulation of plans, or use of methodologies which would have extended their undergraduate achievement. Clearly, candidates working in non-graduate positions will not easily be able to satisfy this requirement.

In addition, all candidates must supply the names of at least two authoritative referees. Where applicants do not meet the normal minimum entry requirements, the Research Degrees Committee must ensure that two satisfactory confidential reports are received before offering recommending to the Degrees and Academic Awards Board that the applicant be offered a place.

In cases where the doctoral programme is to be based on activities and/or data or other **resource accessed via the candidate's employment then, in addition** to the academic requirements for admission listed above, a formal agreement from the employer to permit access to such resource is required. This agreement should make clear how company data and other information might be used.

Some programmes may also require appropriate professional or business experience prior to admission – **such criteria must be agreed at the programme's validation.**

The interview (either face-to-face or at a distance) should, wherever possible, be conducted by at least two members of staff, at least one of whom should have had appropriate

training in selection and admissions procedures.

The staff responsible for interviewing candidates during the entry consultation process must:

- i. ensure that there is sufficient motivation to cope with the rigours of the programme;
- ii. ensure that there are realistic prospects of having the resources to pay the required fees and to provide support through the programme;
- iii. ensure that candidates have a clear picture of the:
 - fees to be paid;
 - working environment;
 - **resources available and expectations concerning resource available from the candidate's employer;**
 - **centre's expectations.**

When the selection process is complete, the Research Degrees Committee, together with other members of staff who interviewed the candidate, will decide whether or not the candidate has been successful, and will record the reason for the recommendation to Degrees and Academic Awards Board.

In addition to the above, candidates who are not graduates of the University are required to **matriculate before enrolment. Matriculation is the formal validation of candidates' qualifications for a scheme of study leading to a degree or other academic award of the University of Wales.** Details of the process of matriculation may be obtained from the Academic Registry, or equivalent, of the Institution or Centre.

5.4 The offer letter

Once an application has been approved by Degrees and Academic Awards Board the Research Degrees Committee is responsible for communicating with the appropriate authority at the centre about applications and for advising administrative staff of admissions decisions.

Where an offer is to be made, details should be dispatched to candidates in accordance with the policies of the centre concerned.

The offer letter for Professional Doctorate applicants should contain the following information:

- the title of the degree programme;
- full-time or part-time study;
- minimum and maximum periods of study;
- expected total fees, including tuition fees and any other fees, charges or costs that candidates would be expected to meet;
- electronic links to the appropriate regulations and Programme Handbook;
- **any assumptions concerning resource available through the candidate's employer;**
- the name of the person at the centre whom they may contact in case of problems;

- a link to this Code of Practice and the applicable Programme Handbook, where further information (including information about arrangements for enrolment, registration and **induction, candidates' responsibilities, attendance and training** requirements, as well as any restrictions on hours of work outside the programme) can be accessed.

5.5 Conditions for enrolling external research students

Candidates who wish to conduct the research element of their Professional Doctorate externally to the centre may be allowed to enrol on the programme subject to:

- adequate arrangements being made for attendance;
- adequate research facilities being available externally;
- adequate supervisory arrangements.

Note: Candidates regularly using facilities at the centre at which they are registered while conducting their research are internal candidates.

Requirements for external candidates

The following information will be required by the University of Wales Degrees and Academic Awards Board, in addition to the normal research proposal, before it will consider approving a programme of study for either full-time or part-time external candidates.

The centre should:

- provide a detailed account of all the resources required for the programme of research, and where the candidate will be able to access the resources. These include specialised sources (such as data holdings, analytical equipment, catalogues, etc.) as well as more general resources such as IT support, internet and library facilities;
- provide a detailed account of the qualifications and roles of the members of the supervisory team (both internal and external) and how they will manage the research programme, including the means and frequency of access to supervisors, the role of the external supervisors, arrangements for informal supervision, as well as formal quarterly **and annual reviews, and management of candidates' professional development portfolios (PDPs)**;
- ensure that, as part of the annual monitoring of external candidates, supervisory teams and candidates are asked to comment explicitly on the frequency and quality of supervisory contacts or meetings;
- agree a provisional timetable of attendance at the centre. Normally the expectation would be that at least 10 days per year should be spent at the centre for supervision and course/ seminar attendance.

Where a candidate has already enrolled and registered, and wishes to change their status to external, the Research Degrees Committee at the institution or centre must be satisfied that the above conditions **can be met as appropriate for the candidate's stage of research**.

6. Supervision

6.1 Confirmation of Director of Studies

Details of the supervisory team must be confirmed when candidates have successfully completed Part One of their programme and are required on the Research Degree Proposal form.

6.2 The supervisory team

Candidates for Part Two of a Professional Doctorate should have at least two supervisors. Normally supervisors should be members of academic staff who are expected to remain in employment at the centre for at least the minimum period of study for which candidates are being enrolled.

Supervisory teams must include staff with:

- experience of supervising research degree candidates to successful completion;
- evidence of recent research activity;
- evidence of substantial research achievements (for example significant levels of publications, grants or awards).

The main supervisor is called the Director of Studies, who has overall responsibility for the work and progress of candidates, supervising them regularly and frequently. Directors of Studies are responsible for directing supervisory teams, and ensuring that candidates and other supervisors know the role of each member of the team.

Directors of Studies must be suitably qualified members of academic staff, and should be active researchers, fulfilling criteria set out by the University of Wales Degrees and Academic Awards Board for inclusion in the Degrees and Academic Awards Board Register of Directors of Studies.

At least one supervisor must have experience of supervising to successful completion of research degrees at or above the level of the proposed enrolment.

It is also expected that all supervisors should be able to demonstrate that they fulfil at least one of the following requirements:

- possession of a higher degree by research;
- authorship of research publications in an area relevant to the proposed research project;
- experience of supervising research in an area relevant to the proposed research project.

In addition to supervisors, an adviser or advisers may be attached to project teams to contribute some specialised knowledge or to act as a link with an external organisation.

Research Degrees Committees are responsible for ensuring that supervisory teams have the appropriate expertise and experience, especially in research activity and achievement and training and that the volume and range of responsibilities assigned to individual members of the supervisory team are such that supervisors are able to carry out their duties

satisfactorily and promptly.

The University of Wales Degrees and Academic Awards Board has determined that for an individual staff member, the supervisory workload, including both Director of Studies and other supervisory roles, should not exceed a total of ten full-time equivalent students, with a maximum of six full-time equivalent students as Director of Studies.

When candidates have submitted their thesis, they no longer count towards this limit, and centres may (within reason) anticipate the submission date in planning supervisory responsibilities for expected student enrolments.

Normally members of staff who are themselves candidates for doctoral degrees should not simultaneously be supervisors of other candidates, as this may give rise to a conflict of interest. Nonetheless, where members of staff are in the final stages of completing their own doctorate, and where they have special expertise relevant to the project not available elsewhere in the centre, the member of staff may (with the approval of Research Degrees Committee) be included as a second or third supervisor.

In seeking such approval, the proposers must state which member of the proposed supervisory team is a research degree candidate, and the special expertise for which they are included in the supervisory team.

6.3 Degrees and Academic Awards Board Register of Directors of Studies and Supervisors

In the context of the Register of Directors of Studies, Research Degrees Committees may submit to the Degrees and Academic Awards Board at any time the names of proposed Directors of Studies who fulfil any of the following criteria:

i. Refereed outputs (publications/conference presentations/exhibitions)

In the previous five years, a minimum of three publications, of which two should be in journals or other publicly available research-related documents, e.g. an essay in a catalogue;

ii. Practice-based expertise

Demonstration in the past five years of national standing in discipline (e.g. keynote speaker at professional conference, election to senior position in national organisation, national award, appointment to national consultancy role such as membership of government committee) and three practice-based journal publications or published conference presentations, government evaluation reports, technical papers, or consultancy reports;

iii. Experience

Prior substantial track-record of research achievement (i.e. less than (a) in past five years but substantial prior publications, etc) and, in the last six years, a track-record of at least two successful doctoral completions as a Director of Studies;

iv. Funded research/classic knowledge transfer expertise

At least two completed Classic Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) in the main academic supervisory role, or other substantial grant-funded research activity. (Mini KTPs should not be counted here).

Where proposed Directors of Studies do not meet any of the criteria (i) to (iv), Research Degrees Committees may make a case to the Degrees and Academic Awards Board for them to be included on the Directors of Studies Register; for example, colleagues may possess a combination of elements from different criteria.

In the context of the Register of Supervisors, Research Degrees Committees may submit to the Degrees and Academic Awards Board at any time the names of proposed supervisors who fulfil any of the following criteria:

- i. Holder of a higher degree by research in a relevant discipline at or above the level at which the person may supervise
- ii. Authorship of research publications in an area relevant to the proposed research programme
- iii. Track-record of research grant awards or refereed publications in the past five years
- iv. Practice-based journal publications or published conference presentations, government evaluation reports, technical papers or consultancy reports in the past five years
- v. Demonstration in the past five years of national standing in discipline (e.g. keynote speaker at professional conference, election to senior position in national organisation, national award, appointment to national consultancy role such as membership of government committee)
- vi. Experience of recent supervision of research in an area relevant to the proposed research project e.g.
 - In the past six years a track record of a successful supervision of a doctorate to completion
 - At least one completed Classic KTP in the past six years in the main academic supervisory role.

Where proposed supervisors do not meet any of the criteria (i) to (vi), Research Degrees Committees may make a case to the Degrees and Academic Awards Board for them to be included on the Supervisors Register; for example, colleagues may possess a combination of elements from different criteria which are slightly outside the time-limits set above.

6.4 Professional development of supervisors

Professional development of supervisors for Part Two of a Professional Doctorate should be managed through a system of mentoring and workshops for new supervisors. All academic staff new to supervision must attend workshops for new supervisors, approved for the purpose by the centre, before the end of their first year as a supervisor. In addition, another member of the supervisory team on which they serve should be assigned formally as their mentor for developing supervisory skills.

It is expected that experienced supervisors will attend workshops and other events to maintain and enhance their skills and to ensure they are familiar with the requirements of the University and centre, especially where new requirements are introduced. Attendance at such may be required. In addition, where experienced supervisors have not been examiners or Chairs of examining boards it will be necessary for them to attend relevant training programmes in these aspects of research degree practice.

6.5 Supervisory roles

The supervisory team is recommended by the centre's Research Degree Committee, but must be formally approved by the Degrees and Academic Awards Board. Normally it will consist of a Director of Studies and a second supervisor. A larger supervisory team may be needed in some cases to ensure adequate expertise and experience, and in some cases a novice supervisor may be added to a team for experience. Research Degrees Committees, however, should aim to recommend a supervisory team of two wherever possible, as working with a larger team brings with it logistical problems for candidates and centres. Supervisory teams should be put together with the intention of each member having a specific role in the supervisory process. Normally Directors of Studies should carry the main responsibility for the day-to-day supervision of the candidate.

Other members of supervisory teams may:

- provide expertise in a particular facet of the research;
- assist the candidate in the development of reflective skills;
- provide support for the Director of Studies;
- provide pastoral support for the candidate;
- act as the main supervisor in the absence of the Director of Studies.

It is essential that supervisory teams establish agreed roles and responsibilities and communicate these to candidates.

6.6 Formal and informal meetings

Meetings between Directors of Studies (or other members of supervisory teams) and candidates are often informal. However a proper record should be kept by candidates and supervisors of agreed actions. Meetings should be held at least fortnightly for full-time candidates, at least during the early stages of their study.

Supervisory teams should hold regular formal meetings with candidates (at least every three months in the case of full-time candidates, or every six months for part-time candidates) to review achievements, progress, skills acquisition, and to establish objectives for the next period of research.

Directors of Studies will ensure completion of a supervision meeting record, and notify the appropriate member of Research Degrees Committee when meetings have been held and whether, in the opinion of a team, progress is satisfactory. It is particularly important, if progress is not satisfactory, that the appropriate member of Research Degrees Committee is informed promptly, so that appropriate remedial action can be taken without delay.

6.7 Records of meetings

Written records should be kept by candidates and supervisors of scheduled meetings. At a minimum, the following information should be recorded:

- dates of meetings;
- those present;
- outcome of actions from last meeting;
- actions agreed;
- date of next meeting.

It may also be useful to record, where relevant:

- progress made by candidates since the previous meeting;
- developments which may have affected the progress of candidates;
- other developments (within the centre or externally) relevant to candidates;;
- concerns of either candidates or supervisors;
- review of planned time-scale;
- deliverables initiated by candidates.

These records should form part of candidates' professional development portfolios, and should be available to the Research Degrees Committee for inspection.

6.8 Absence of Director of Studies

Where a Director of Studies is absent for short periods (three months or less), another member of the supervisory team should assume their responsibilities, either through formal or informal arrangements.

Where a Director of Studies is expected to be absent for a period of more than three months, the Research Degrees Committees should consult with candidates and supervisory teams and appoint another Director of Studies (either for the period of absence of the current Director of Studies, or for the remainder of the research programme (as appropriate)).

The impact of extended absence by other members of supervisory teams should also be **considered by the candidate's Director of Studies, and where necessary the Director of Studies** should consult with the Research Degrees Committee to identify and appoint a suitable alternative supervisor.

6.9 Progress, review and monitoring

Supervisory teams play a critical role in ensuring that doctoral students are able to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to make progress on research projects at the rate required to allow completion within an appropriate period.

Candidates and supervisors are jointly responsible for ensuring that the objectives of the research plan are reviewed at reasonable intervals (for example, every three months for full-time candidates) and adjusted in the light of developments.

Supervisors are responsible for evaluating the progress of candidates in achieving these objectives, and advising them of the corrective action necessary where problems arise.

At an early stage (preferably within three months of commencing Part Two for full-time candidates and six months for part-time candidates) candidates should agree a research programme with the supervisory team and submit a research proposal to the Research Degrees Committee and to the Degrees and Academic Awards Board, whose approval shall be required for continued enrolment.

Where candidates have not submitted a project for approval within six months of commencing Part Two, this will be a cause of concern and, in such circumstances, Research Degrees Committees should ensure that satisfactory progress is being made and that supervisory teams have developed adequate plans to deal with any barriers to progress.

6.10 What constitutes satisfactory progress?

Satisfactory progress generally means making sufficient progress to maintain the likelihood of completion within the normal minimum period of enrolment. Unforeseen personal or professional problems may impede progress, and this advice is intended to provide general guidance, not to anticipate all possible eventualities.

Formal reviews

Part Two candidates and their supervisory teams should, wherever possible, agree and complete an on-line record of supervisory meetings or notify the appropriate member of Research Degrees Committee when reviews have been completed.

Normally no formal report of the outcome of the review is needed; however where serious and unresolved concerns about progress have been raised then the appropriate member of Research Degrees Committee should be notified of the nature of the concerns and the actions agreed to deal with them.

It is essential, where supervisory teams have raised concerns formally about progress that every effort is made to ensure that candidates understand the basis for the judgement and have the opportunity to comment on it. The supervisors should give the candidate a written warning about the basis of their judgement of lack of satisfactory progress, setting out the agreed actions required to establish satisfactory progress, the timeframe of the plan, and the consequences of a further formal finding of lack of satisfactory progress. It is the responsibility of the appropriate member of Research Degrees Committee to ensure that candidates have the opportunity to comment on the warning, and this may be done independently of the supervisory team.

It is particularly important that supervisory teams strike a balance between positive support of development and critical appraisal of progress. Where candidates do not show satisfactory development, despite the support and guidance of the supervisory team and the Research Degrees Committee, the expectation is that they will not be allowed to continue.

Annual monitoring

Annually, Part Two candidates and their supervisory teams should complete a report to Research Degrees Committee detailing progress against planned objectives, and objectives for the coming year, as well as drawing attention to any set-backs or problems which might delay the successful completion of research projects. Reports should also allow candidates the opportunity to comment on the facilities available to them, and on the quality of the supervision they receive.

Annual monitoring reports are the official record of student progression and re-enrolment is dependent upon Institutions/Centres providing evidence that a student has made progress with their studies. A student cannot be re-enrolled unless the University is satisfied that the progression made is sufficient.

Although candidates and supervisory teams are required to file a report annually, candidates may submit a report directly to the Research Degrees Committee at any time if they experience problems which are not being resolved satisfactorily.

Failure to submit a satisfactory annual report or failure to resolve satisfactorily any issues in the report of concern to the Research Degrees Committee may result in enrolment being terminated. Research Degrees Committees will normally require evidence of a previous formal warning to candidates on progress, a recovery plan agreed at that time, and further evidence of lack of progress, before the research programme is terminated. Candidates have the right to appeal against such decisions.

The supervisory team should normally complete Section 1 of the annual monitoring form first, with the candidate being given the opportunity to comment on what has been written by the supervisory team when completing their section of the form.

Suspension and Extension Requests

Candidates may apply for an extension to their maximum period of study if required. Where a candidate is unable to continue with their research or their performance is adversely affected by exceptional circumstances, they may apply for a suspension of studies.

All extension and suspension requests must be submitted to the Research Degrees Committee (RDC) for consideration, prior to submission to the University of Wales' Special Cases Committee for final consideration and approval.

Detailed guidelines on the management of suspension and extension requests can be found in Appendix 1 to this Code of Practice.

7. Assessment

The formal procedures for assessing Professional Doctorates are set out in the Regulations.

7.1 Part One

Assessment of Part One will comprise examinations of an advanced character in the fields of study prescribed by the programme. These examinations will include evaluation of any professional/industrial practice and training and may take the form of unseen written examination papers, or set projects or other forms of course assessment. Exemptions may be granted from specified components of Part One of the programme. The pass mark for Part One is 40%, compensation between modules may be allowed only where this has been agreed at validation (restrictions on compensation must be noted in the Programme Handbook).

The Examining Board for Part One of the programme will comprise:

- i. Chair
- ii. Programme Director
- iii. Members of the Programme Team
- iv. **At least one external examiner appointed according to the University's regulations for taught programmes.**

Resit possibilities for students who fail any or all the modules in Part One are specified in the regulations.

Part One of the programme must be successfully completed prior to commencement of Part Two, except that preliminary work may commence on the research proposal once Part One assessments are completed, although prior to the formal examination board.

7.2 Part Two

In Part Two the oral examination of a candidate on the basis of his or her thesis, and, where appropriate, portfolio, forms the assessment, and criteria for the award of the appropriate degree are included in the Guide for the Examiners and Chairs of Examining Boards.

7.3 Submission of the thesis and portfolio

To be eligible to submit a thesis, Professional Doctorate candidates must be enrolled on the degree for which submission is intended, have successfully completed Part One and have paid all fees due (including any re-examination fee required) and satisfied all other financial obligations.

The intention to submit a thesis or, where appropriate, a thesis together with a portfolio of other work for examination is given by the supervisory team submitting the nominations for the examining board initially to the Research Degrees Committee.

Where a candidate and supervisory team disagree as to whether a thesis is ready for submission and examination, and the candidate wishes to submit the thesis against the advice and judgement of his/her supervisory team, the candidate must provide a written declaration to the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee before submission noting their intention to submit. The Chair of examining board will make examiners aware of the **supervisory team's views prior to the examination taking place.**

Within the maximum enrolment period, candidates should submit to the centre two copies of the temporarily or permanently bound thesis and separate material, as well as an additional loose copy of the abstract transcribed onto the appropriate form. Where the nature of the work makes it difficult to comply with the requirement for copies of separate material, candidates should seek advice from the Academic Registry on numbers of copies.

Candidates may not amend, add to, or delete from the theses after they have been submitted and prior to examination. However, should candidates find that material has been left out of the copies of the thesis sent to the examiners, then the Chairs of the examining boards may take action to permit the missing material to be sent to the examiners.

Arrangements for the examinations and all associated correspondence are made by the University of Wales Registry.

7.4 Examination of thesis and portfolio

Candidates for Part Two of a Professional Doctorate are examined on the basis of their research project. This involves the examiners independently reviewing and reporting on the thesis and any associated portfolio, followed by an examining board conducting an oral examination. However, in the case of a re-submitted thesis, an oral examination may be waived at the discretion of the examining board. This is done on the basis of a satisfactory oral examination after the initial submission.

The date of the examination is normally within twelve **working weeks of the examiners'** receipt of the thesis and any associated portfolio. If the submission is delayed then the time commitments of members of the examining board may preclude an early oral examination taking place.

In cases where there has been a significant delay in the submission after the appointment of the examining board, it is good practice for the academic authorities to ensure that members of the board will be available for the oral examination within an acceptable time-frame. The advice of the Research Degrees Committee should be sought if it seems necessary for an alternative examiner to be appointed.

Note: The oral examination may not be deferred for a period exceeding 12 months from the date of submission of the thesis.

This timescales applies to both initial and resubmitted theses.

7.5 The Examining Board

An examining board for Part Two of a Professional Doctorate is normally made up of an independent Chair, an Internal Examiner and an External Examiner. However, if a candidate is a member of academic staff at the centre concerned, the examining board should be made up of the Chair (as above) together with two External Examiners.

Internal Examiners are staff of the centre or of other collaborative centres or accredited institutions of the University of Wales. Whilst there is no specified limit on the number of times a member of staff can act as an internal examiner, it is good practice to vary the

person appointed to the role. External Examiners are from outside the University of Wales and the centres.

The composition of the examining board is arranged by the Research Degrees Committee after consultation with candidates and supervisory teams, and subject to ratification by the Degrees and Academic Awards Board. Submission of the proposed examining board to the Degrees and Academic Awards Board should be done about three months prior to the expected submission of the thesis.

The Chair, who may not be a member of the supervisory team, shall be a senior member of academic staff approved for the purpose by the centre. The responsibility of the Chair is to ensure that the examination is conducted in an appropriate manner, according to the established procedures in place.

Should it prove impossible to appoint an appropriate Internal Examiner from within the centre, Degrees and Academic Awards Board may appoint an Internal Examiner from another centre or an accredited institution of the University of Wales.

If, in exceptional circumstances, it proves impossible to appoint an Internal Examiner either from the staff of the centre or from another centre or an accredited institution of the University of Wales, the Degrees and Academic Awards Board may, on the recommendation of a Research Degrees Committee, appoint a second External Examiner in lieu of an Internal Examiner.

Appointment and Role of the Chair

The Chair, who may not be a member of the supervisory team, shall be a senior member of academic staff approved for the purpose by the institution or centre. The Chair should **not have any previous connection with the candidate's work and it is considered good practice to appoint a Chair from a different part of the institution or centre to that of the candidate.** If this is not possible and where the Chair has a direct line management relationship to the internal examiner, a Conflict of Interest declaration must be made to the Research Degrees Committee when the composition of the examination board is being considered.

The primary role and responsibility of the Chair is to ensure that the examination process is rigorous, consistent and fair, and the examination is conducted in an appropriate manner, according to the established procedures in place.

As such, Chair's should ensure the following:

- that they attend the **pre-examination meeting with the examiners' to structure the agenda** for the examination and agree who will lead on each topic and question;
- at the start of the examination the Chair should introduce the examiners and candidate and explain his/her role in the examination process and how the examination will proceed;
- that the examiners and candidate are satisfied with the room and conditions for the examination and are ready to proceed;
- that during the course of the examination the agenda agreed at the pre-meeting is followed and both examiners are satisfied that all their questions and concerns have been addressed;

- if the Director of Studies or any supervisor is present at the examination that no communication or help can be given to the candidate;
- at the end of the examination, ensuring that both examiners and candidate have had the opportunity to ask any questions;
- communicating the recommendation of the examining board to the candidate and explaining the next stages in the approval process for that recommendation;
- **that examiners are aware of the outcomes available to them under the University's regulations and the need to evidence their recommendation in the reports;**
- that the external examiner is reminded on the need for a detailed report on the oral examination.

7.6 Criteria for the appointment of examiners for Part Two

The Research Degrees Committee should ensure that the proposed examiners:

- have been made aware of the nature and purpose of the degree for which candidates are being examined and the criteria by which the candidates are assessed;
- have received a copy of the abstract to the thesis;
- possess specialist knowledge and expertise in the subject of research as well as experience in examining research degrees;
- are prepared to examine the whole thesis.

It is not acceptable to appoint an examiner who is not prepared to make a judgment on the whole thesis, even if his or her particular expertise is more relevant to some parts of the work than to others.

The Research Degrees Committee should also ensure that the External Examiner:

- is (or has until recently been) a member of academic staff at a recognised Higher Education Institution in the UK, or elsewhere, but not at an institution or centre, *or* holds a role which is deemed to be equivalent of an academic role in the discipline area (e.g. curator of major museum or gallery, holder of high office in religious organisation, member of research staff at a university-recognised or government-recognised research institute). If the External Examiner has recently retired, they must remain active within their field;
- has not had direct or indirect communication with candidates concerning their research;
- is not enrolled on a higher degree;
- is a recognised authority in the field, with evidence of recent advanced scholarship or research;
- has extensive publications in refereed journals in the general subject area of the thesis;
- has experience of examining postgraduate research degrees;
- has not examined more than five candidates for Professional Doctorates at the institution or centre in the previous twelve months and not more than one quarter of any cohort.

An External Examiner can be appointed to a Professional Doctorate examining board at a particular centre no more than five times in any twelve-month period and for not more than one quarter of any cohort.

Research Degrees Committees should avoid at all time appointments which suggest reciprocity. In addition, care should be taken to ensure that individual members of academic staff at any particular Centre or academic department in an institution are not normally appointed as an internal examiner for research degree examinations more than twice in any 12 month period.

Where an Internal Examiner has a managerial relationship with the Director of Studies, care must be taken to ensure the complete independence of the examiner. In any case, there should be no discussion of the research project or candidates between examiners and the supervisory team or the candidate following the Internal **Examiner's agreement** to serve in the role.

7.7 The examination process

The written reports

Prior to the oral examination, examiners are required to forward to the Academic Registry an independent written appraisal of the thesis using the form provided for the purpose. Examiners should not communicate directly between themselves prior to their independent reports being received by the Registry.

If an examiner has a concern about the thesis before the submission of the independent reports it should be discussed only with the Chair of the examining board. In addition, prior to the submission of the report, an examiner should not see the report on the thesis from another examiner.

The raising of concerns

Directors of Studies have the right to convey to the Chair of the examining board any **concerns relevant to a candidate's research projects, the resulting thesis or its examination** which the board should take into account prior to reaching its decision. In particular, Directors of Studies should convey to the Chair information relating to a **candidate's illness or disability which examiners will need to take into account in the conduct of the oral examination.**

In such cases, Directors of Studies should convey these concerns, in writing, both to the Chair and to the candidate as soon as practicable after the presentation of the thesis and in any event, in good time to permit a candidate to consider the points made and prepare a response prior to the examination taking place.

The oral examination

A preliminary meeting of the examining board should take place prior to the oral examination to consider the structure of the questioning, to confirm the initial opinion of

the examiners and to decide upon the main points to be raised during the examination (which should include any concerns previously raised in writing by the Director of Studies).

Candidates may decide whether or not supervisors are present during the oral examination, but if present supervisors may only speak in response to a direct question from the examiners. It is good practice for candidates to be asked in writing whether they agree to the attendance of supervisors.

The oral examination will normally be conducted at the centre. Exceptionally, and with the approval of the Degrees and Academic Awards Board, the oral examination may be conducted at another place or by video link. In the latter case the Chair should ensure that the candidate is able to communicate only with the examining board during the examination.

In the case of candidates normally resident outside of the United Kingdom, the oral examination may be deferred until their return to this country, provided that they give no **less than two months' written notice to the Academic Registry of the dates between** which they will be available for oral examination in this country.

Arrangements for the conduct of oral examinations by video link or electronic means **must confirm with the University's Guidelines for the Conduct of Oral Examination (Viva Voce)** by Electronic Means included as Appendix 2.

When the examining board assembles on the day of the examination, the independent written reports of each examiner should be available to all members of the board, and to the Director of Studies, if present. The oral examination should cover all aspects of the thesis, in particular the points selected by the examiners at their preliminary meeting. Candidates should be given an opportunity to comment on any adverse points and on any amendments of substance that the examiners are intending to recommend.

At the start of examinations, Chairs should ensure that candidates are introduced to the examiners, and that the atmosphere is reasonably relaxed so that candidates are not intimidated by the event.

Examiners may sometimes wish to indicate their initial opinion of the thesis at the beginning of the oral examination, so that candidates have the opportunity to challenge it; however no indication should be given that the oral examination is a formality.

Examiners are required to satisfy themselves at the oral examination that thesis is the **candidate's original work**.

At the end of the oral examination, candidates and any members of the supervisory team are required to withdraw. The Chair will inform candidates of the approximate time when the announcement of the outcome, that is, the recommendation to be made to the Degrees and Academic Awards Board, is expected.

External Examiner's Report on the Oral Examination

External examiners are required to write a report specifically on the candidate's performance in the oral examination. The oral examination is a key part of the examination process for a research award and external examiners play a critical role in ensuring that the quality and standards of the awards are maintained. External

examiners are therefore asked to produce a report which should clearly state the issues **and questions addressed in the oral examination and how the candidate's response and performance** contributed to the overall examination outcome and recommendation.

Communicating the outcome of the examination

The Chair should agree with the examiners on the announcement to the candidate of the recommendation of the examining board. The normal expectation is that this will be on the day of the examination following the oral examination. In exceptional circumstances, for example where the examiners are unable to agree on the outcome, the recommendation may need to be deferred. In this case candidates should be informed of the conflict on the day of the examination, and of the established procedures for resolving it.

At the end of the examination, the examiners are required to submit a report setting out their reasons for their recommendation. In the report examiners should explain in detail how **candidates' work meets the requirements for originality and scholarship, or how it failed to do so**. Full instructions must be included of any changes required to the thesis, and these requirements must be made available to candidates.

Where there is some disagreement, examiners should submit separate reports and recommendations to the Research Degrees Committee within ten days of the oral examination.

Following the private discussion between the examiners, candidates (and the Director of Studies, should candidates wish) should be invited to return to the examination room. The recommendation of the examining board should be conveyed to candidates and will be confirmed firstly by the Degrees and Academic Awards Board and then by the University of Wales Examining Board.

The recommendation should include a clear statement selected from those available in the regulations. In the case of a requirement for minor corrections or resubmission, this should include minimum time periods before such re-submission may take place. There must also be clear indications of what candidates must complete before re-submission, and of the form of the re-submission. In such circumstances a further oral examination may, or may not, be held, at the discretion of the examining board.

Candidates may be required to pay a fee for the resubmission period as determined by the Institution/Centre of study. During the resubmission period, candidates should expect continued supervision at an appropriate level as defined by the Institution/Centre.

Following the oral examination, all copies of the thesis should be left with the Chair of the examining board for return to the Academic Registry together with the appropriate form.

Guidance for examiners on resubmitted theses

Candidates' research degree awards of the University are examined on the basis of their work. This involves examiners independently reviewing and reporting on the thesis, followed by an examining board conducting an oral examination. Where a candidate has **resubmitted their thesis for examination, examiners' reports must be fully comprehensive** and as detailed as possible. This is especially important where a second oral examination **is not required, as the examiner's reports will constitute the evidence for a** recommendation for an award to be made. In particular, examiners must make explicit

and detailed reference to the corrections, amendments and modifications that were required following the first submission, and indicate whether the modified thesis now meets the requirement for an award to be made.

8. Rights and responsibilities of candidates

8.1 Entitlements and responsibilities

Centres shall be responsible for informing candidates of their entitlements and responsibilities at registration annually. Such information shall take account of the expectations of QAA, NPC as well as legislative or other requirements.

8.2 Prohibition of the use of professional proof readers

Candidates' submitting theses for a research degree award of the University must include in the thesis a statement, signed by the candidate, showing to what extent the work submitted is the **result of the candidate's own investigation. The award of a research degree** shows the ability of the holder to create and interpret 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.

As such, the University does not permit the use of professional proof readers, or recourse to the services of 'ghost-writing' agencies (for example in the preparation of theses), or of outside word-processing agencies which offer correction or improvement of English. Any candidate who makes use of the services of such agencies render themselves liable for an **academic penalty in accordance with the University's regulations and unfair practice procedure.**

8.3 Leave

Internal full-time candidates are expected to be engaged with their programmes for 35 hours during the normal working week.

Where candidates are away from the campus without prior notification to the Director of Studies, then they should inform their Director of Studies of the duration of the absence, and any reason for it.

For part-time candidates, the same rules apply, except that attendance requirements are reduced; the expectation is that they will be undertaking work related directly to their programme, for 17 hours during the normal working week, to be agreed with the **candidate's Director of Studies.**

The attendance requirements for external candidates are detailed in section 4.5.

In all cases, arrangements for taking leave should be discussed with the Director of Studies.

8.4 Employment

Where candidates undertake placements as part of their Professional Doctorate programme the conditions governing the placement, including any remuneration should be clearly specified and agreed in writing by the candidate, the centre and the placement provider.

In addition engaging in academic work may be helpful to the career development of some candidates, provided it does not interfere with the progress of their programme of study. With the agreement of the Director of Studies, full-time candidates may undertake up to six hours of paid or unpaid academic work not directly associated with their programme during the normal working week. International candidates must also ensure that they meet any requirements stipulated by their visa.

8.5 Appeals

Candidates have a right to appeal against the termination of studies or, in certain established circumstances, the outcome of the examination process and should seek advice from the Academic Registry as to the correct procedure for this purpose.

8.6 Complaints

Candidates may make complaints which will be heard by the centre in accordance with the procedure approved for the purpose. The Academic Registry shall be responsible for ensuring that information on how complaints may be made, and heard, is made available to all candidates for research degrees.

9. Annual Institutional Reports

Research Degrees Committees should receive annually written reports from the responsible officer of the centre on the overall progress of candidates following Professional Doctorate programmes, including registrations, completions, and withdrawals/suspensions, attendance at training programmes by supervisors and candidates, drawing attention to any innovative practices or training that they feel has helped the quality of their programmes, and highlighting any general quality problems in the research environment that need to be addressed. The Research Degrees Committee will submit an overview report annually to the Degrees and Academic Awards Board on these matters.

Appendix 1

Guidelines on Managing Extensions and Suspensions

Extension and Suspension Requests:

Candidates may apply for an extension to their maximum period of study if required. Where a candidate is unable to continue with their research or their performance is adversely affected by exceptional circumstances, they may apply for a suspension of studies.

All extension and suspension requests must be submitted to the Research Degrees Committee (RDC) for consideration, prior to submission to the University of Wales' Special Cases Committee for final consideration and approval.

For further information on the grounds by which the University will grant a request, please **consult the University's Guidelines on Extension and Suspension requests:**

<http://www.wales.ac.uk/en/Registry/CollaborativeCentres/RegulationsandProtocols/SpecialCasesCopy.aspx>

Role of the Research Degrees Committee

The RDC plays a critical role in elevating the evidence and rationale for extension and suspension requests, and making a recommendation to the University as to whether it supports the request. The RDC also has responsibility for managing the process of extensions and suspensions and ensuring that both candidates and supervisory teams are working effectively towards a timely completion and submission.

Candidates and supervisory teams should note the following:

- The University will receive and consider extension requests sympathetically, but extension requests are not granted automatically and as of right and the case has to be made;
- The University would expect best practice to show that one extension or suspension request should suffice in most circumstances and, where multiple and ongoing requests are made, the documentation must be explicit and address the reasons for this;
- Requests must be well considered and be able to demonstrate and convince the RDC and the Special Cases Committee that they are both proportionate and fair;

- All paperwork submitted to the RDC and the Special Cases Committee must be complete, comprehensive, accurate and clear;
- Requests must show clear evidence for the nature of the request and contain appropriate supporting documentation;
- Supervisory teams must explicitly indicate their support or otherwise for a request. With extension requests, the supervisory team should clearly articulate how the period requested is feasible to allow a student to complete and submit their thesis in a timely manner, bearing in mind the evidence of the research completed to date and the research to be completed;

Candidates are also eligible to apply to the RDC and Special Cases Committee for an extension during the continuation or resubmission period.

Resumption of Research following a Suspension:

It is important that candidates' who have been granted a period of suspension are supported back into their programme of research, particularly where the absence has been for a period of time exceeding 6 months. When resuming their programme of research, candidates should follow an action plan which clearly articulates the steps candidates will take to fully re-engage with their research and to ensure that they will complete within a timely manner.

To help this process and drawing upon best practice within the sector, the University requires that both the candidate and supervisory team develop an action plan to facilitate the process of re-engagement for an initial period of 6 months. The University has in place a pro-forma (SC1) specifically for this purpose.

The role of the RDC is to proactively monitor the process of resumption of studies and ensure that both candidates and their supervisory teams are working effectively.

Appendix 2

Guidelines for the Conduct of Oral Examination (*Viva Voce*) by Electronic Means

These guidelines should be read in conjunction with the appropriate University of Wales Common Academic Regulations and Codes of Practice for research degrees.

Introduction

The oral examination (commonly referred to as the *viva*) is an integral feature of the examination process of candidates for research degree awards of the University of Wales. To this end, the Common Academic Regulations of the University require such an examination to be held for its research degree awards. The function of the Examining Board is to ascertain that the thesis submitted for award is at the appropriate standard; that it is the work of the candidate who is being examined and that the candidate displays the attributes expected of holders of the award. In order to ensure the integrity of the examining process, the University requires the oral examination to take place on a face-to-face basis, with candidate, Chair and examiners in the same room. The relevant Regulations and Codes of Practice for research programmes can be accessed via the [University's website](#).

The University recognises that it may be necessary - under very exceptional conditions - for arrangements to be made for oral examinations to take place through electronic media. (The University will not give approval to the use of telephone links alone for the purposes of examinations). Accordingly, the University may give approval to requests that electronic media be used, in exceptional circumstances, as defined below:

- i. where conditions have arisen under which it would not be possible otherwise to proceed with the oral examination (e.g. where a student cannot return to the UK because of visa or other restrictions) *or*;
- ii. where agreed arrangements for a face to face oral examination have had to be terminated because of unexpected circumstances (e.g. sudden illness of one of the participants). *Note: where such circumstances arise, the University would expect that, normally, the oral examination should be postponed, rather than be held through electronic means, but it is accepted that - exceptionally - it will be necessary for electronic means to be used instead (e.g. where the student would suffer disproportionately as a result of postponement).*

Approval Process

The Research Degrees Committee (RDC) is responsible to the University for Examination Board arrangements within Institutions and Collaborative Centres. All requests for an oral examination to be conducted in any form other than on a face-to-face basis must be submitted to the RDC for consideration. After considering the request, and as with all examination board arrangements, the RDC will make a recommendation to the Degrees and Academic Awards Board (DAAB) at the University who will consider whether to approve the request.

The RDC and DAAB will consider each case placed before it on its individual merits, although it will also expect to see the following:

- i. written confirmation from the intended participants, including the candidate that they have no objection to the examination being held through electronic means;
- ii. confirmation from the RDC that the oral examination will be held within a maximum of 12 weeks of submission of the thesis;
- iii. a written statement from the candidate that he/she has waived any right to appeal against the outcome of the examination *on the grounds of the use of the electronic medium or consequences arising from the use of such medium*;
- iv. confirmation that the proposed use of electronic medium will not impact or constrain the time allotted for the oral examination itself;
- v. confirmation that arrangements are in place for the participants to familiarise themselves with the scope and limitations of the medium in use;
- vi. confirmation the RDC is satisfied that the medium proposed is effective and sufficient for the examination to be held;
- vii. confirmation the candidate will be given an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the medium and be given clear instructions on how the examination will be conducted;

In addition, the RDC should ensure the following:

- viii. that due consideration is given to time-zone differences;
- ix. that consideration is given to the location in order to ensure the security of the examination. Upon commencement of the Examining Board, the members of the Board should be satisfied that the candidate does not have anyone else present. The University would recommend the use of British Council premises and in cases where it is not used, the reasons for not doing so must be provided and put forward to DAAB for consideration;
- x. that the Examining Board members are fully briefed on the appropriate conduct of the examination, for example:
 - that if the examiners should repeat any questions, they do so calmly and clearly;
 - if there should be a break in communication, the Chair recaps proceedings and any questions/comments interrupted are repeated as soon as communication is restored;
 - the Chair should ensure that the candidate has heard and understood each question, if necessary.

Where such arrangements are given approval by the RDC and subsequently DAAB, it is suggested that provided that the candidate is in agreement, the supervisor should be invited by the Chair of the Examining Board to be present with the examiners.

The University, via DAAB will report to the Academic Board at the University on each case in which it has given approval to the use of electronic media for research degree examinations.

Appendix 3

The University of Wales' expectations on supervision following an initial examination

The University recognises that where an initial examination has resulted in Option C (modification and resubmission of the thesis) or option E (modification and resubmission for consideration of an MPhil award) it is likely that the candidate will need further supervision and guidance from their supervisory team as appropriate. The University also recognises that **the candidate's circumstances during the resubmission** period may have changed and thus may affect the amount of time they wish to devote to the thesis and the resubmission. As such, the University has the following expectations that candidates and centres/institutions should follow on supervision during this period.

Once the University's Degree and Academic Award Board has confirmed the outcome of Option C (or E), candidates and their supervisory team will be required to meet within 6 weeks to determine what level of supervision is appropriate for the resubmission. A brief written report from that meeting, detailing that both candidates and supervisory teams have considered the outcome and have agreed to a schedule and level of supervision for the resubmission period, should be considered and noted by the Research Degree Committee. This report should also be included in the standard Research Degree Committee papers considered by the University's Degree and Academic Award Board.

Where a resubmission is anticipated to take between 6 months and 2 years the University would expect a minimum of 1 formal supervisory meeting to be held every 3 months up to the point of resubmission (and as per current pre-submission requirements), unless the initial report to the Research Degree Committee explicitly noted less supervision was required. A written record of these formal meetings should be produced and signed off by both candidates and supervisory teams.

A resubmission anticipated to take less than 6 months should have at least 1 formal supervisory meeting during this period, excluding the initial meeting, with a written record produced.

For resubmissions estimated to take between 6 month and the maximum of 2 years, a monitoring form should be produced at the 12 month and 20 month date from the confirmation of the initial result, and detailing progress towards resubmission.

Fees for supervision and access to centre/institutions during the resubmission period will be a matter to be determined between the candidate and the centre/institution concerned.