

University of Westminster
Code of Practice for Research Degree
Programmes 2011/12

October 2011

Contents

Part 1	Introduction	3
Part 2	Research Degrees - fundamental principles	6
Part 3	Research Degrees - the process	12
Part 4	Research Degrees - the academic key stages	20
Part 5	Research Training	25
Part 6	Student Representations – appeals and complaints	26
Part 7	Research Degrees – roles and responsibilities	27
Part 8	Teaching and other academic duties undertaken by research degree students	35
Part 9	Student Services for research degree students	39
Part 10	External Research Degree Study Scheme (ERDS)	40
Part 11	Policy on Research Degree Admissions and Research Environment	42
Part 12	Research Degree Supervisor Training	44
Part 13	Full-Time Staff undertaking research degrees at Westminster	46
Part 14	Research Degrees by Published Work	47
Annexe A	General administrative arrangements for research degrees	48
Annexe B	QAA National Qualifications Framework - Descriptor for qualifications at Doctoral (D) level: Doctoral degree	51
Annexe C	Joint Statement of the Research Councils' Skills Training Requirements for Research Students (and link to University of Westminster Research Training Programme)	52
Annexe D	Other essential reading	53
Annexe E	Acknowledgements	54

Part I

Introduction

- 1.1 The Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes sets out the University of Westminster's policy, procedural and quality framework for research degrees (Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy). It forms one element within the University's overall framework for the governance, management and assurance of the academic standards and quality of its research degrees, a framework which provides the grounding for developing good research practice in the University's research students as the foundation for their future careers.
- 1.2 In addition to this Code, the other elements in the framework are:
 - a) Essential Westminster: The Student Guide
 - b) University of Westminster Regulations for the Award of the Degrees of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy (the Research Degree Regulations)
 - c) University of Westminster Guidelines for Research Degree Students (the Guidelines)
 - d) University Code of Research Good Practice
 - e) University Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research (the Ethics Code)
 - f) University Research Training Programme
 - g) University Intellectual Property Policy
 - h) Procedure for Managing Allegations of Research Misconduct
- 1.3 None of these documents, nor the individual provisions contained in them, should be read in isolation from the others.
- 1.4 The University, its staff and its students are subject in addition to the obligations imposed by these documents to requirements imposed by national and international legislation including Data Protection, Freedom of Information, Human Tissue Act and Human Rights. The University's framework for research degrees seeks to provide grounding in these areas for research students as a necessary aspect of the responsible conduct of research in preparation for a research career.
- 1.5 This Code has been informed by a number of models from other higher education institutions and external advisory bodies, including the Joint Skills Statement of the Research Councils UK and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). A list of

acknowledgements appears at the end of this document.

Context and Purpose

- 1.6 The University of Westminster has many years of experience in offering research degrees. Its policies, procedures and practice have developed over this period through the exercise of continuous review and enhancement.
- 1.7 The purpose of this Code of Practice is firstly to bring together, articulate and codify the fundamental principles behind the existing regulations, procedures, guidance and best practice which are the products of this experience in the context of common external expectations of best practice such as those set out in the QAA Revised Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (September 2004), and those generally applicable within the national and international research institutions and communities.
- 1.8 Secondly, the Code of Practice defines the University's expectations of those engaged in research degree activity, provides an overview of relevant policies and clear, procedural guidance as well as identifying and assigning responsibilities to the various constituencies participating in research degrees, whilst recognising the diverse and highly distributed nature of the University.
- 1.9 Thirdly it sets out the standard procedures and specific responsibilities in relation to academic supervision, administration and assessment of research degree students.
- 1.10 Whilst the Code sets out the minimum standards required by the University, individual Schools may adopt local requirements which exceed the standards laid out in this document. Individual Schools' policies and procedures may not incorporate standards lower than those specified by the University.

Scope

- 1.11 This Code applies to all individuals, staff and students who have any involvement in the University of Westminster's research degree provision. The document is also offered to external participants in the University's research degree activity (for example, external supervisors, Collaborating Establishments, and external examiners) by way of guidance as to the University's normal requirements of good practice.

Aims

1.12 The Code seeks:

- a) To ensure that research students receive an appropriate quality of provision, that they are effectively supervised; that their individual circumstances, conditions and needs are regularly evaluated; and that their progress is regularly reviewed to facilitate the achievement of their potential and to achieve successful and timely completion.
- b) To set out clearly the arrangements by which the University satisfies itself as to the academic standards of its research degrees and the quality of the education and learning opportunities leading to their attainment.
- c) To promote a common and clear understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of the constituencies participating in research degrees.

General administrative arrangements for research degrees

1.13 The University's general administrative arrangements for research degrees and research student administration are set out in Annexe A.

Part 2

Fundamental principles

Nature and duration

- 2.1 The expected outcomes of a research degree are defined in the University Research Degree Regulations, which state that:

'The MPhil [Master of Philosophy] shall be awarded to a candidate who, having critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic and demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field, has presented and defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners'

and

'The PhD [Doctor of Philosophy] shall be awarded to a candidate who, having critically investigated and evaluated an approved topic resulting in an independent and original contribution to knowledge, and demonstrated an understanding of research methods appropriate to the chosen field, has presented and defended a thesis by oral examination to the satisfaction of the examiners'

- 2.2 A more detailed description of what these qualifications entail as determined by the National Qualifications Framework may be found at Annexe B.
- 2.3 In admitting a research degree student, the University is confirming its expectation that the candidate should successfully complete the project within a pre-defined period of time. This is four years for a full-time student and eight years for a part-time student. The scope of the project should be such that it should be achievable in this time by a capable, suitably qualified and diligent student, who is properly supported and supervised. This is the criterion against which all academic judgements are made, whether by the University's Research, Enterprise and Knowledge Transfer Committee (REKTC) for registration and transfer or by supervisors and Schools in reviewing and evaluating student progress.
- 2.4 Other than in exceptional circumstances, full-time academic staff may not undertake research degree study at the University of Westminster, other than via the Published Work route or the Doctorate in Professional Education Studies. Further details of the policy governing full-time staff undertaking research degrees may be found at Part 13 of this Code.
- 2.5 In enrolling for a research degree at the University of Westminster, a research degree candidate confirms their understanding and acceptance of the University's expectations as to completion time, and that all academic judgments made on behalf of the University as to the adequacy of progress are measured against these expectations.
- 2.6 In admitting a candidate to undertake a research degree, the School in which the

candidate is to be enrolled undertakes to provide the necessary support and supervision to make timely completion feasible, given the necessary levels of diligence on the part of the candidate. All parties are required to accept that the research degree is a common undertaking in which each party has responsibilities; the student for their own study, and the School and University for facilitating and guiding it. Equally, all should have a common commitment to meeting the timescales.

2.7 The minimum and maximum periods of registration for both full-time and part-time students are determined by the University within the Research Degree Regulations and are reproduced below. For further details of specific timescales please refer to the Research Degree Regulations, paragraph 5.2.

2.8 Maximum periods of registration:

Full-time students	=	4 years
Part-time students	=	8 years

2.9 The University will also ensure, through the regulatory framework, the maintenance of the academic standards for research degree awards through the application of minimum periods of registration.

Research Degrees - the candidate's role

2.10 It must be recognised explicitly by all concerned that research students are embarking on a major and largely self-directed research project. The University has a critical role in providing certain essential elements including: supervision and guidance; access to a culture and environment which will foster the research and the development of research skills; and access to training opportunities for the student to acquire the necessary skills. However, candidates must recognise that the award of PhD is reserved for candidates whose work meets the award criteria set out in 2.1. above. Such students will have demonstrably and successfully, proposed, planned and completed a major project of self-directed study, have acquired the skills necessary for the successful completion of such a project; and have made an original contribution to knowledge (more detail on doctoral qualification descriptions is given at Annexe B). Although it is recognised that supervision by subject experts is a fundamental and indispensable element in the research degree process, it must be acknowledged by all involved that in the case of study for a degree solely by research it is primarily with the student that the responsibility lies for managing learning, for determining what is required and for carrying it out.

The academic process and the research environment

2.11 It is recognised that a conducive research environment is a key factor in realising a student's potential and achieving a timely and successful completion. In particular, ample opportunity should be available for communication and interaction with interested researchers, access to the requisite information resources, equipment

and other facilities. Please refer to the University's policy on research environment and admissions which is located in Part 11 of this Code.

- 2.12 The University's admission procedures have inbuilt checks to ensure the availability of these elements prior to admission. Where an appropriate environment does not exist in the immediate locality of study, or cannot be accessed by the student, the viability of the project and the quality of the student experience may be compromised. Consequently, students should be admitted only where they can be trained and supervised in an environment which is supportive of research. Such an environment will allow access to a critical mass of research students working in related fields and will allow opportunities for meeting and for communicating with researchers and research students to allow the discussion of the research. Where such an environment is not available in the immediate locality of the research, access to an appropriate network and research culture through internal or external links is considered essential and the supervisors bear primary responsibility for identifying appropriate opportunities for such links, and the Schools for assisting in providing access to them.

Assurance of adequacy of supervisory and other resources prior to admission

- 2.13 Research degree candidates shall only be admitted where the necessary resources for a timely and successful completion exist and can reasonably be predicted to continue to exist for the duration of the registration. The Dean of School is responsible for providing appropriate procedures for ensuring that adequate supervisory and other resources exist before each individual admission is approved by the School.
- 2.14 To ensure clarity for all parties from the outset, and to allow applicants to make informed and considered decisions in relation to accepting a place at the University, clear written information as to the nature and extent of the supervision and facilities which will be available to each candidate, shall be provided and accepted by the candidate prior to admission to the University. This information will include:
- a) a general statement describing the resources and facilities available to research students in the field;
 - b) details of the Director of Studies and any other prospective supervisors;
 - c) a definition of the general area for the research with a clear provision that until registration of the research degree some months following enrolment, the proposed research and supervisory arrangements are subject to further work, to agreement with the supervisors and to approval by the School and ultimately the University REKTC and to the relevant ethical approval.

Research training and skills

- 2.15 It is recognised that the development of appropriate and necessary skills in

research students is desirable in terms of personal development and career planning, but it is also considered necessary for the successful completion of the research project and as a foundation for a future research or other career through the development of transferable skills. It is recognised that such skills may be present in varying degrees in individuals at the outset and the University's training policy therefore specifies an initial evaluation of existing skills and training, followed by annual reviews, to identify training needs throughout the research degree programme. Under the University's policy on research training for students, the Director of Studies plays the fundamental role in identifying a student's existing skills and specifying their training needs within the scope of the University Research Training Programme and using the Research Skills Training Log.

- 2.16 The University is committed to the continuous review of its policies for skills training and personal development to ensure its adequacy and appropriateness for current needs.

The assurance of quality and standards: an outline of the framework

- 2.17 University-level responsibility for research degree awards, academic standards and quality assurance lies with the University's REKTC, which has delegated authority from Academic Council in respect of research degree admissions, registration, progression, assessment and conferment as well as strategic and policy matters in relation to research degrees.
- 2.18 Deans of School and their nominated School Research Directors hold local responsibility for the management and co-ordination of research at the School level.
- 2.19 Academic standards are maintained at each of the key progression stages through a process of peer review, with assessments of student work being provided by subject experts. Recommendations to the University REKTC based on this advice are then put forward by a Rapporteur in respect of applications from individual candidates for progression and a decision is reached on the basis of the advice and recommendation.
- 2.20 In addition to the regular exercise of its responsibilities for research degree registrations, progression and conferment in respect of individual research degree candidates, and as an important element of the University's quality assurance procedures for research degrees, the University REKTC through the Research Degrees Sub Committee also annually monitors student progress, supervisory arrangements, provision of facilities and the student experience. This process is known as the Annual Progress Review and ensures that provision across the University is of an appropriate quality and standard. The Annual Progress Review is conducted by School Research Directors and Directors of Studies and is audited on behalf of the University REKTC by the Research Degrees Sub Committee.
- 2.21 Within the Annual Progress Review, Directors of Studies supply reports on individual candidates under a number of headings:

- a) frequency of supervision meetings and of supervision team meetings (with and without the student being present)
 - b) The progress the student is making with the research
 - c) Any issues or problems
 - d) Progress with research training and skills development
 - e) Recommendation as to progression into the next year of study
- 2.22 Crucially, the Annual Progress Review provides a structured process whereby the Director of Studies is required to record at the end of each academic session their academic judgment as to the satisfactory or unsatisfactory nature of each student's academic progress. This is an academic judgment reached in the light of the standards specified at 2.1, 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7 and 2.8 above and acts where necessary as a trigger for action to address failing performance by students.
- 2.23 In addition to the reports of the Director of Studies/supervisor(s), each School Research Director writes an overview report describing and evaluating School provision in research degrees under a similar list of headings:
- a) Overall, the progress the students are making with the research
 - b) The regularity, frequency and standard of supervision (including the effectiveness of the team supervision arrangements for the student)
 - c) Overall, the progress the students are making with the University Research Training Programme
 - d) The research culture and community
 - e) The provision of facilities, equipment and materials to enable the safe and efficient conduct of research by the students
 - f) The adequacy and appropriateness of the library and computing facilities
 - g) The funding and support arrangements, including the allocation of staff time and the use of funds allocated to particular projects
 - h) Examples of good practice for dissemination to other Schools
 - i) Comments on the completion rate in the School
- 2.24 These reports are considered by the University REKTC (audited by the Research Degrees Sub Committee) and any issues arising are dealt with or referred for action to the appropriate authority within the University. The recommendations of the Directors of Studies as to progression to the next year of study are implemented by the Research Office.
- 2.25 The findings of the Annual Progress Review and the student survey (see 2.28 below) are considered by RDSC and Schools and reports and recommendations arising are presented to REKTC and Academic Council as required. .

The Student Voice

- 2.26 The University considers that a positive and fulfilling student experience is a vital aid to the realisation of potential, and to good and timely progress. It also considers that the student voice is a significant means of bringing this about. The

research student community is represented at the University-level by student representatives from each of the Schools. In addition to open meetings and consideration of formal business, such as annual monitoring information and policy development, the Forum also maintains an online presence through Facebook to facilitate wider engagement and networking. Professional support staff contribute to the work of the Forum as appropriate.

- 2.27 In addition, students have the opportunity to raise issues via their School Research Director or the Research Degrees Manager. It is important that any problems are dealt with promptly and not allowed to drift, so students are encouraged to discuss concerns at the earliest possible opportunity, initially with their Director of Studies if possible. If this fails to resolve the issue, or if the student feels unable to approach their Director of Studies, then they should contact the PhD Tutor, Head of Doctoral Programme or Research Director for their School. Finally, if the issue remains unresolved following these steps, the student should approach the Research Degrees Manager.
- 2.28 The University participates in the national Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), which is administered by the Higher Education Academy. This provides students with the opportunity to comment upon their experience. The outcomes of the survey are considered by the Research Students' Forum and by RDSC. Students may also raise any particular problems or issues through their supervisor, the School PhD tutor, Head of Doctoral Programme, School Research Director or the Research Degrees Manager in the Research Office.

Part 3

Research Degrees – the process

Enquiries and Applications

- 3.1 The University aims to provide clear and accurate information on its research activity and profile, to allow potential students (and other participants in research degree activity such as potential supervisors, sponsors and so on) the opportunity of identifying academic 'fit' with the University. Publicity is available by web and print. From time to time scholarship schemes will be publicised. Publicity and applications procedures are in conformity with Equal Opportunities and Diversity policies.
- 3.2 Applications will be accepted only from suitably qualified applicants. The minimum qualifications for entry to a research degree are determined by the University within the Research Degree Regulations and will be made clear to potential applicants.
- 3.3 All applications shall be made on the standard University application form for research degree programmes.
- 3.4 All applications, including those submitted in response to scholarship schemes, will be processed through the University Research Office, located in the Academic Services Department (the Research Office).
- 3.5 Applicants should include the names of two academic referees on their application forms, and both references should be taken up by the School before the offer of a place is made.
- 3.6 All procedures connected with the application and admission of research students shall be subject to the University's Equal Opportunities Policy and its Code of Practice for Students with Disabilities at <http://www.wmin.ac.uk/diversityframework>

Selection

- 3.7 In order to maximise the opportunities for students to take up training opportunities at the appropriate time in the academic year and at the earliest available opportunity, and to allow for the effective operation of the Annual Progress Review procedures, new students will normally be admitted for commencement of studies only within a published annual admission cycle consisting of two start-points, in September and January each year. In cases of project-funded studentships, candidates may commence at other times of year, provided this is supported by the School Research Director who should ensure that the student can access the necessary orientation, supervision and training opportunities upon arrival.

- 3.8 Students will be accepted only in accordance with the principles given in Section 2 above.
- 3.9 Individual Schools may approve admissions of research degree candidates provided that the fundamental principles above are met in that:
- a) The candidate meets the minimum requirements in terms of qualifications, including English language qualifications, as set out in the Research Degree Regulations
 - b) The candidate has the ability to complete in the prescribed period of time
 - c) The appropriate supervision, training and research environment are available
- 3.10 Applicants will not be admitted without an interview, either face to face, or, in the case of applicants living abroad or at long distances, by telephone. Interviews will be conducted by at least two appropriately qualified and prepared academic staff, including the putative Director of Studies. Attention must be paid to the experience, skills, academic record and potential of the candidate, their motivation and commitment, the suitability of the proposed programme of study to the candidate's needs and career objectives, and to the level of competence in both written and spoken English which must be sufficient for pursuing the proposed programme.
- 3.11 It is in the ultimate best interests of the applicant and the University to establish in the case of self-financing students that the supply of funds will be adequate to support the continuation of study through to completion and the University will make enquiries of applicants using the application process and the interview to explore the financial viability of the proposed research degree project.
- 3.12 It will be the responsibility of the interviewers to make known to the candidate in general terms:
- a) The resources and facilities which will be available to support their study and the duration for which these will be made available (subject to prior agreement with the Dean of School or nominee)
 - b) The arrangements for annual review and confirmation of satisfactory performance for progression to the following year, including the timescales for passing key stages of enrolment, registration, transfer and submission, and the requirements of the University Research Training Programme
 - c) The position regarding any teaching or other academic support duties that may be available to or required of the applicant and the training they will be required to undertake to support this activity
- 3.13 Admissions must be supported by a minimum of two members of academic staff and must be signed off on behalf of the School.
- 3.14 In recognition of the significant resource commitment entailed in the admission of

research students, and in particular the commitment of minimum amounts of staff supervisory time, School-level admissions procedures should include explicit confirmation on behalf of the relevant resource holders as to the availability of the necessary staff time, accommodation and facilities to support a successful completion within the maximum period of registration.

- 3.15 Institutional policy on Equal Opportunities should be observed throughout the admissions process.

Admissions

- 3.16 No student will be deemed to have been offered or to have accepted a place other than through a formal offer of admission from the Research Office, which shall include an acceptance proforma for signature and return by the applicant.
- 3.17 The formal offer letter shall make clear that the offer of a place constitutes confirmation by the University, on the basis of information provided by the applicant in the application form and during the interview, of the candidate's acceptability in academic terms. It does not constitute a binding agreement to the research project which has been proposed by the applicant at the point of application for a place, as this will be subject for further development with the supervisors following enrolment, and must be endorsed by the School and the University before it is formally registered. This includes ethics approval where applicable.

The formal offer shall include information about:

- a) the terms and conditions of the offer
- b) area of research but not specific title (it must be emphasised to prospective students that the offer of a place is made on the basis of the applicant's suitability, motivation and academic qualifications but the research proposal is subject to further development and the approval of the supervisors, School and University REKTC at the point of registration)
- c) information on fees
- d) information on any funding available
- e) enrolment date
- f) timeline for registration, transfer, submission, confirmation of examination arrangements, thesis submission, viva voce and final completion
- g) name of the School
- h) name of the Director of Studies
- i) name/s of 2nd supervisors if available at this point
- j) general information in relation to the workspace and facilities provided by the School for its research degree students
- k) any pre-conditions or post-conditions - where any are attached to the admission, details to be provided of how their satisfaction will be verified and the consequences of not satisfying them

- l) training programme
- m) practical information on accommodation, finance, and travel

3.18 With their offer letter, students will receive copies of (or web addresses for) all relevant documents including this Code of Practice and the documents listed at 1.2 above. The letter will emphasise to students that these documents constitute the overarching regulatory framework within which they will conduct their research and which impose obligations upon the student, and that they should therefore be studied in detail. It will be emphasised in the letter that, as part of the enrolment procedure, students will be asked to sign a declaration that they have read and accept the regulatory framework, including the material relating to assessment, progression and the management of unsatisfactory progress. In particular, information will be provided on their requirements and responsibilities in relation to the following aspects of research degree study:

a) Frequency of contact with supervisors

Students are required to maintain regular contact with supervisors, the frequency of which will be agreed in the initial stages of supervision in accordance with the needs of the discipline and the specific research area. In normal circumstances, failure to maintain contact will be defined as failure to respond to a communication from the supervisors within a reasonable period. In such instances, it will be concluded that there is an emerging performance issue and the appropriate procedures will be initiated (see Annexe F of the Research Degree Regulations).

b) Teaching and Other Academic Duties

Students shall be provided with an outline of the opportunities, conditions and training for teaching or other academic duties, which will clarify for them the nature of the obligations and responsibilities and the support provided by the University. The details of any such activity should be finalised following enrolment and the training needs dealt with under the University Research Training Programme, following discussions with the supervisor (and other members of staff responsible for managing their teaching activity where applicable).

c) Conduct and Academic Performance

The University's expectation of students in relation to conduct and academic performance, including: personal and professional development; maintaining regular contact with supervisors; preparing adequately for meetings with supervisors; setting and keeping to timetables and deadlines including planning and submitting work on time and maintaining satisfactory progress with the research; making supervisors aware of any specific needs or circumstances likely to affect their work.

d) Research Training

Students will be required to attend and participate in and, where applicable, to successfully complete any assessment as required in relation to the University Research Training Programme or other related studies as determined by the University and Director of Studies.

e) Regulatory Framework

Students will be expected to familiarise themselves with the institutional regulations and policies that affect them - including qualification aims and standards, Health and Safety rules, Intellectual Property issues and Research Ethics and Good Practice.

- 3.19 Research student applications will be subject to the University's policies on declared criminal convictions.

Supervision

- 3.20 Each student will be allocated a supervisory team at the time of admission [please see paragraph 3.17h) and i)]. In accordance with the University's Research Degree Regulations, this shall consist of a Director of Studies and, normally, up to two Second Supervisors.

- 3.21 The members of the supervisory team must, jointly, comply with the University's requirements as set out in the Research Degree Regulations in relation to minimum supervisory experience and with the University's policy on supervisor training, further details of which may be found at Part 12 of this Code.

- 3.22 The Second Supervisor(s) may be included in the team for a number of reasons, which should be made clear to all concerned. These may include: providing particular expertise in a specific area; deputising in the absence of the Director of Studies; assisting in the monitoring of the student's progress; providing mentoring and guidance on the process and procedural elements; providing the necessary supervisory experience to comply with University regulations, by assisting in 'inducting and mentoring' the Director of Studies and other supervisors, where appropriate, in research supervision. The Second Supervisor need not necessarily be a specialist in the area of research under study, but must be suitably qualified to undertake the role. It should be recognised by students and supervisors that the roles of the individual supervisors may differ significantly one from the other depending on their function within the supervisory team and that an equal level of input from each supervisor is not necessarily in the best interests of the student. The student must develop an adequate understanding of the purpose and operation of the University's team supervision system, including an understanding of the range of roles undertaken within the team, and an appreciation that each supervisor in the team is not equally active with the other/s at all points in the programme.

- 3.23 In establishing the supervisory arrangements in respect of each individual student, and having due regard for student progress and the student experience as the primary consideration, the University shall also take into account the need to bring new supervisors on stream in accordance with team supervision regulations which require an overall minimum level of experience in the team and which encourages development through mentoring as well as formal and informal training.
- 3.24 The University policy on supervisor training is set out in Part 12 of the Code and requires that all staff who supervise research degree students will have appropriate training in supervisory methods. The Dean of School has responsibility for ensuring supervisors are appropriately trained and developed in accordance with this policy.
- 3.25 Although the interview and selection panel for research degree candidates will usually consist of at least one of the putative supervisors, it is emphasised that no student will be deemed to have been offered or to have accepted a place by any means other than through a formal offer of admission from the Research Office and written confirmation of acceptance by the applicant (see also paragraph 3.16 for further details).
- 3.26 Each full-time research student is entitled to a total of 36 hours per annum of input from their supervisory team, though in practice, levels of supervisory input may be varied from year to year to reflect the changing needs of the student and demands of the project at different stages during the registration. For part-time students, the entitlement is 24 hours per annum. It is the responsibility of the Dean of School to ensure that staff timetables allow for this level of input across the registration period.
- 3.27 In accepting candidates for research degrees, potential supervisors, School Research Directors and Deans of School must keep uppermost in their mind the importance of the quality of supervision. The University admissions policy for research degrees clearly places the quality of the candidate at the forefront, and equally admissions practice must ensure that the quality of the supervision provided to research degree candidates is not jeopardised as a result of excessive volume and range of responsibilities assigned to supervisors.

Enrolment

- 3.28 New and continuing students are required to enrol and to re-enrol as directed by the Research Office for each academic year in which study takes place. Students are required to pay the requisite tuition fee in respect of each year of enrolment in accordance with the University's requirements and the instructions of the Research Office.
- 3.29 In the interests of ensuring that problems and issues are dealt with promptly rather than allowed to drift, students failing to complete all the requirements of enrolment and re-enrolment in accordance with the published requirements of the University will not be permitted access to University premises, facilities or supervision.

- 3.30 Where study is suspended, the formal procedures for suspending must be completed. Suspensions may be permitted in the first instance for periods of six months or one year, subject to the approval of the University REKTC. The Committee will not normally approve periods of suspension of less than six months. In exceptional circumstances, periods of suspension may be approved retrospectively but students should be aware of the risks of assuming that any period of research inactivity or loss of contact for whatever reason will be retrospectively approved as a suspension, rather than dealt with as unsatisfactory performance.

Induction

- 3.31 The University would normally expect three forms of 'induction' to be provided for new students, each with a different focus: institutional (University regulations, policies and procedures, services,); local (orientation, health and safety); and supervisory (subject-specific, including Research Training). It is recognised that owing to variations in structures and provided that the necessary material is covered, Schools may arrange to offer local induction through School, department or other type of local provision.
- 3.32 An institutional orientation will be provided to all new research students, at or around their first enrolment. Indicatively, this will cover:
- a) Introduction to the University Research Degree Regulations and the process for research degrees
 - b) Introduction to Guidelines for Research Degree Students
 - c) Introduction to the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes and the Code of Research Good Practice
 - d) Introduction to progression and monitoring arrangements including Registration, Transfer, Annual Progress Review, use of Research Supervision Logs and Research Skills Training Logs and procedures for addressing unsatisfactory performance
 - e) Introduction to the University Research Training Programme
 - f) Introduction to student feedback arrangements (Research Students' Forum, Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), procedure for addressing difficulties/problems)
 - g) Introduction to the Blackboard site for research students
 - h) Introduction to Data Protection and Freedom of Information
 - i) Introduction to Research Ethics
 - j) Research Good Practice, including research misconduct
 - k) Information Systems and Library Services
 - l) Geographical orientation
 - m) Introduction to Health and Safety (University level – will also need to be covered locally in some subjects)
 - n) Services for Students – including International, Careers, Counselling and Advisory
 - o) Students' Union

- p) Introduction to key staff
 - q) The context of the PhD at Westminster – academic orientation and overview of the University's research profile
- 3.33 Students should also receive a local orientation to their School or unit (see 3.31 above), including specific health and safety procedures; local procedures, structures and arrangements relevant to research; introductions to key staff; information on seminar and workshop arrangements, journal clubs, and research career management.
- 3.34 The student will also be inducted by the supervisor into the concepts of research, research good practice, research integrity and misconduct, and the supervisor's role in the operation of the progress monitoring arrangements, including the use of the Research Supervision Log, the Research Skills Training Log, the Annual Progress Review and the procedures for addressing unsatisfactory performance. The supervisor will rehearse with the student the timetable for the project specifying the dates by which registration and transfer and submission must be completed. The working methods, modes and frequency of supervision meetings will be agreed during this initial stage. The supervisor will also undertake a training and skills evaluation of the student, in the light of the University Research Training Programme and based on this will specify an individual programme of training for the student for the academic year using the Research Skills Training Log. This will be monitored by the Director of Studies through the Annual Progress Review at the end of the academic year.

Part 4

Research Degrees - the academic key stages

Registration

- 4.1 The research degree cycle begins at initial enrolment, which is followed by a period of four to six months (depending on the mode of study) of orientation, reading and research planning time, as students familiarise themselves with existing literature, the research environment and the supervisors, and define the research project. The viability of the project is tested and established through an academic assessment process known as Registration (as distinct from enrolment) by which the student presents a structured research proposal for the approval of the University REKTC. This delineates the work planned, the proposed timescales, the supervision and training arrangements, the resources and facilities to be used and forms the basis of the University's assessment of the viability of the programme as a basis for a PhD.
- 4.2 Within this process, there are specific responsibilities for the student, the supervisors, the School Research Director, the University REKTC and the Chair of the University Research Degrees Committee and these are set out in Part 7 of this Code.
- 4.3 It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that their Application to Register is submitted on time.
- 4.4 The Application to Register shall normally be submitted to the Research Office for approval by the University REKTC not later than four months from the date of enrolment in the case of full-time students, and not later than six months in the case of part-time students. Late submission may be deemed to be an indicator of unsatisfactory or failing performance, and in cases of late registration, the University will request a formal statement of the reasons from the candidate and the supervisors.
- 4.5 The registration process must be completed at the latest by the end of the first academic year.
- 4.6 Save in the most exceptional cases, a student not having registered their degree formally with the University REKTC by the end of their first year will be deemed to be achieving inadequate progress. Procedures will therefore normally be initiated for the termination of studies. The student will not be invited to re-enrol for the next academic year other than where permitted by special approval of the University REKTC.

Progress Monitoring

- 4.7 The University considers that it is in the interests of all concerned that research students complete successfully within an agreed time (see 2.5 - 2.8). It considers that structured arrangements for the monitoring of progress and for addressing unsatisfactory performance are essential in delivering timely and successful completions.
- 4.8 The University's arrangements for monitoring progress are set out in this section, and include processes undertaken at University, School and Supervisor level in the assurance of standards and quality. The progress monitoring and quality assurance arrangements also pay due heed to the importance of the student feedback arrangements, as described in paragraphs 2.24 - 2.28 above.
- 4.9 The key tools in the monitoring of progress in research and research training are the Supervisory Induction (that is, the initial stages in the supervision process), the Research Supervision Log, the Research Skills Training Log, the Annual Progress Review.
- 4.10 The Research Supervision Log (RSL) is to be completed by supervisors at each formal supervision session. The RSL is used to record notes on the substance of the discussion, together with the details of decisions made and actions to be taken, for follow-up at subsequent supervision meetings. The RSL also provides a space for the supervisor to record any concerns regarding student progress and any action taken in respect of these concerns. The University expects that a minimum of six logs per year should be completed in respect of each full-time student and three per part-time student. It is the joint responsibility of the student and supervisors to ensure that the logs are completed. Logs should be completed even for remote supervision sessions (email, telephone, online), though they need not be completed in respect of *ad hoc* informal discussions such as are typical in laboratory-based disciplines.
- 4.11 Supervisors and students are also required to maintain copies or notes of correspondence, including emails and consultations occurring in between formal supervision meetings.
- 4.12 Copies of the six logs (or three, in the case of part-time students) completed during the academic year are submitted by the Director of Studies to the School Research Director as part of the Annual Progress Review.
- 4.13 In addition to the key academic stages of the research degree (enrolment, registration, transfer and examination), the University operates clear arrangements for student performance and progress to be evaluated, reported on and acted upon. This occurs through the Annual Progress Review.
- 4.14 In the Annual Progress Review, Directors of Studies provide reports on student progress and achievement within the audit period, commenting under a number of

headings, and may provide general comments on any issues affecting progress, for example technical problems or absence of equipment. The Director of Studies also formally reports on progress and achievement with the University Research Training Programme that was specified during the early stages of supervision each year (see paragraphs 3.34 and 4.1). Finally, the Director of Studies records a formal academic judgment as to whether progress is or is not satisfactory. The supervisory judgment as to the adequacy of progress to be recorded each year is made by measuring actual progress against the rate of progress which would be necessary for the achievement of a timely and successful completion (see paragraphs 2.1 - 2.8 above). This is defined as four years for full-time students and eight years for part-time students.

- 4.15 Where judgments of inadequate progress/unsatisfactory performance are recorded, procedures will be instigated which are governed by Annexe F - *Procedure to Address Unsatisfactory Performance in Research Degree Candidates* in the Research Degree Regulations. The student is permitted a remediation period and provided with guidance as to what must be achieved during this period (the targets and timescales for achievement are known as the Remediation Plan or Improvement Plan) in order to achieve a satisfactory status report at the expiry of the remediation period. It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure their Remediation Plan is successfully completed by the deadline. It should be noted that where a Remediation Plan is established as a result of the Annual Progress Review, both full-time and part-time students are permitted a maximum of two months for remediation, in order to meet the re-enrolment timetable for the next session. In this case, where progress continues to be unsatisfactory by the end of the session (end of August) the student will not be invited to re-enrol for the next academic year. It is the responsibility of the supervisor to ensure that sufficient and appropriate guidance is available to support the student in completing their Remediation Plan.
- 4.16 Assuming the successful completion of the Remediation Plan, a report of satisfactory progress will subsequently be returned by the supervisor and the student will be invited to re-enrol for the next academic year.
- 4.17 Where, following the expiry of the Remediation Plan, the supervisor judges that progress is still unsatisfactory, the supervisor shall initiate procedures for the withdrawal by the University REKTC of the student's registration (discontinuation of studies/termination of studies), in accordance with the provision of Annexe F of the Research Degree Regulations. The student will not be invited to re-enrol pending consideration by the University REKTC of the case for withdrawing the registration.
- 4.18 Supervisory judgments as to the successful acquisition of research skills as specified through the University Research Training Programme will be measured and reported on by the Director of Studies within the scope of the Annual Progress Review (including where this is to be achieved through the formal assessment of a module), and a formal recommendation as to satisfactory or unsatisfactory progress in research training will be included in the report.

Transfer to PhD

- 4.19 Transfer to PhD represents the point at which it is confirmed that the project has the potential for PhD in that it will represent an original contribution to knowledge and will be completed within the specified timescale.
- 4.20 Transfer applications must be submitted by the end of year 2 (full-time students) or year 4 (part-time students).
- 4.21 As with registration, transfer is an academic assessment process whereby the viability of the work as a PhD is tested, through the submission of documentation with an extended progress report and a Transfer Interview conducted by the School, reports on which are considered for approval by the University REKTC.
- 4.22 It is the responsibility of the candidate to ensure that their Application to Transfer is submitted on time.

Examination

- 4.23 The examination shall be carried out in accordance with the Research Degree Regulations.
- 4.24 The examination arrangements must be submitted to the REKTC for approval three months in advance of the proposed date of the viva in order that the REKTC may be satisfied as to their appropriateness in terms of academic standards and fairness to the candidate.
- 4.25 The thesis must be submitted by the candidate to the Research Office not later than four weeks before the proposed date of the viva, to allow adequate time for scrutiny by the examiners.
- 4.26 Failure to observe the timescales in 4.24 and 4.25 above may lead to delay in the examination.
- 4.27 The arrangements must be submitted for examination prior to the expiry of the registration period.
- 4.28 Normally each examining team consists of one external examiner, who will generally take the leading role in the examination process, and one internal. To protect the interests of all participants in the viva, there is also a Chair of Examiners, appointed by the School Research Director, who co-ordinates the arrangements and attests to the fair and proper conduct of the examination in a report to the REKTC.
- 4.29 The University will keep under review the arrangements in relation to the development of staff for the internal examining role.
- 4.30 The examiners shall provide appropriate feedback to the candidate: in the case of

- resubmission the candidate shall be provided with a written statement as to the deficiencies of the thesis; and in the case of minor amendments clear indication shall be given of the nature of the changes required.
- 4.31 The examiners shall be provided by the University with the necessary documentation to allow them to undertake their role/s in accordance with the Research Degree Regulations and best practice requirements, including, in particular, the University's expectation that the decision of the examiners shall be clearly justifiable in relation to the content of the preliminary and final reports they submit.
- 4.32 In the spirit of continuous enhancement of practice, the University will invite examiners to provide general feedback on the examination, associated procedures or other relevant elements of practice.

Part 5

Research Training

- 5.1 The University welcomes the emphasis on research training and personal development planning and considers that this embraces research student training, the acquisition and development of key specialist and transferable skills, as well as personal and career planning and development. The University considers that the thesis and original contribution to knowledge are not the sole outputs of the research degree study process, which should also ensure that students develop appropriate specialist and transferable skills, and are adequately prepared for employment and for successful careers in academia or elsewhere.
- 5.2 The University has an approved, mandatory University Research Training Programme for research students. This defines the skills and abilities which should be present in a graduating research student, and specifies the requisite elements of training and development and the timetable, in relation to the student's research, according to which they should be undertaken. Training is delivered through a range of provisions at University, School or Department and Supervisor level.
- 5.3 The Director of Studies is responsible for determining in respect of each individual student the requirements for research training and development in accordance with the University Research Training Programme. This is recorded in discussion with the student in the initial stages of supervision (and again at the beginning of each subsequent year) using the Research Skills Training Log and is monitored regularly at formal supervision meetings and reviewed at year end through the Annual Progress Review.
- 5.4 The student bears responsibility for undertaking all elements of training and development under the University Research Training Programme as specified by the University and the Director of Studies.
- 5.5 The University's policy on research training and the University Research Training Programme have been developed in the light of the emphasis on PDP (personal development planning) and the precepts of the Joint Skills Statement by Research Councils UK and they therefore recognise that individual training needs will vary from student to student. In formulating the individual training programme for each academic year, therefore, Directors of Studies may recognise that certain of the requisite skills are already present in the student as evidenced by prior experience or learning, and may accordingly record exemptions in the Research Skills Training Log. However, exemption from training for teaching is permitted only in cases where acceptable teaching qualifications are held.
- 5.6 The University will keep under review the appropriateness and effectiveness of its arrangements for research training and will work to develop appropriate PDP support and tools for research students.

Part 6

Student Representations - appeals and complaints

- 6.1 The University maintains clear procedures for students to pursue appeals against academic decisions and complaints regarding provision.
- 6.2 Research degree candidates may pursue appeals against academic decisions following examination or assessment decisions (assessment decisions are defined here as academic decisions of unsatisfactory performance taken at any time during the programme and are distinct from examination decisions which can occur only following examination for the award of the degree).
- 6.3 Appeals against assessment decisions are governed by the provisions of Annexe F of the Research Degree Regulations, which provides detailed procedural guidelines for addressing unsatisfactory academic performance by research degree candidates both prior to and following registration of the degree. Under Annexe F, research students who are not performing to the required standard receive a series of warnings in relation to performance and are given opportunities for restoring their performance to the necessary standard. The procedures for warning students of their situation and allowing them to improve must be completed and clearly recorded prior to the initiation of the procedures to withdraw the registration or discontinue the student's enrolment. Annexe F also provides for students to contest decisions to withdraw registration or discontinue enrolment, and the Regulations include detailed procedures for managing appeals by students.
- 6.4 Appeals against examination decisions are governed by Section 15 of the Research Degree Regulations which provides for the review of decisions taken by the REKTC on the basis of the recommendations of the examiners.
- 6.5 Appeals against assessment decisions taken prior to examination for example, those taken in response to Applications to Register; Transfer; Annual Progress Review etc., are governed by Section 16 of the Research Degree Regulations which provides for the review of discontinuation decisions taken by the REKTC.
- 6.6. In the case of both appeals against assessment decisions and appeals against examination decisions, the procedures provide for the review of decisions by parties independent of the original decision.

Part 7

Roles and responsibilities

The University

- 7.1 Recognising its mission for high quality research, teaching and knowledge transfer, and the essential importance to each of these functions of the availability of high quality research degree provision, including research training, the University is responsible for defining its research degree awards, determining the regulatory framework for these awards, and for the adequacy of the arrangements for maintaining the academic standards of its research degrees and the quality of the education and learning opportunities leading to their attainment.
- 7.2 The University is responsible for determining, applying and keeping under review the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes, and the policy, procedural and regulatory framework for research degrees, including the arrangements for admission of students, registration of students, transfer to PhD, examination and conferment (including requests for review), and the withdrawal of candidates (including appeals against University withdrawal decisions). It is responsible for ensuring that the policy, practice and regulatory framework are conducive to the assurance of quality and standards in the University's research degree provision.
- 7.3 The University is responsible for providing appropriate management and administration structures and policies, including appropriate staff development opportunities, for the delivery of its mission in respect of research degrees, the assurance of standards and quality and the optimisation of the student experience.
- 7.4 The University is committed to maintaining an environment conducive to research, including fostering relations where appropriate with internal and external partners and collaboration opportunities to exploit strengths and synergies, as well as fostering good relationships with external key bodies such as the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), the Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) and the Research Councils (RCUK) and major charities and other external agencies with interests in research degrees.
- 7.5 The University is responsible for ensuring that appropriate and accessible support services are provided for research students, and that the availability of such services is appropriately targeted to research students.
- 7.6 The responsibilities of the Deans of School in relation to research degrees are outlined below. Under the University's management structures for research, the day-to-day discharge of a number of these responsibilities may be delegated to the School Research Director, who is appointed to act as a focus for research and research degree matters within the School.

The Responsibilities of the Dean of School (or nominee)

- 7.7 Each School appoints a School Research Director who is a member of academic staff nominated by the Dean of School and who will normally be charged with monitoring the overall situation in regard to the School's research students.
- 7.8 The School Research Director has functional responsibilities both to the School and to the University. It is recognised that owing to variations in the size and structure of the Schools, the roles of individual School Research Directors will differ, and in some Schools, responsibilities may be delegated to individual units, departments, research clusters or groups. This Code of Practice does not seek to address these local responsibilities, but sets out below the institutional responsibilities of the Dean of School.
- a) To be responsible overall for the welfare and academic progress of the research students in the School.
 - b) To ensure that the requirements set out in this Code of Practice are fulfilled.
 - c) To ensure the effectiveness of the School's arrangements for the supervision of research degree students, including the arrangements for the selection and development of supervisors in accordance with relevant University policies and in particular the policy on Supervisor Training set out in Part 12 of this Code.
 - d) To provide arrangements to ensure that the appropriate resource-holder approvals are in place for the costs incurred in relation to each research student admission, in terms of staff supervision time, accommodation, research facilities and other resources.
 - e) To approve the supervision arrangements in respect of each student at the point of admission, including the allocation of timetable hours for Directors of Studies and Second Supervisors throughout the duration of the proposed registration, in accordance with University policy.
 - f) To ensure compliance with University policies and procedures on Equal Opportunities and Disabilities in relation to the selection, development, assessment and all other matters in relation to research degree applicants and students.
 - g) To ensure that decisions on applications are made and communicated to applicants according to established procedure and in a timely fashion.
 - h) To ensure the provision of adequate research environment and facilities for full-time and part-time students, in accordance with the University policy set out in Part 11 of the Code.
 - i) To ensure adequate access to appropriate training opportunities, including training for teaching responsibilities, for all research degree students.

- j) To ensure the School maintains current and collated information on teaching and other academic support activity by research students
- k) To ensure that the University's procedures for monitoring student progress are strictly observed. This includes the use of Research Supervision Logs, training documentation, Annexe F procedures and the Annual Progress Review.
- l) To ensure that appropriate structures exist (including the School REKTCs) to facilitate the School-level overview and consideration of research degree issues, including in particular admissions, progress monitoring and student progression, and feedback from research degree participants, both internal and external.
- m) To ensure that the School discharges its research leadership responsibilities in relation to research students as set out in the University Code of Research Good Practice.

7.9 The responsibilities of the School Research Director

Please refer to paragraphs 7.6, 7.7 and 7.8 for details of the inter-relationship and relative responsibilities of Deans of Schools and School Research Directors.

The University-level role and responsibilities of the School Research Director are set out below:

- a) To maintain an overview of progress within the current cohorts of students, measured against University expectations in relation to academic milestones such as registration, transfer and submission.
- b) To ensure that all processes in relation to research degree students (notably enrolment, registration, transfer, examination, and Annual Progress Review) are conducted in a timely manner and in accordance with University and School requirements.
- c) To conduct the School-level approval processes for research degree candidates in relation to applications from students for University REKTC approval for registration, transfer, examination and other approvals.
- d) To provide clear, accurate and current information prior to admission on research degree opportunities, nature of supervision available, facilities and resources and accommodation.
- e) To advise the Research Office in advance as to planned recruitment initiatives, especially in the case of scholarship schemes.
- f) To assist the Dean of School in ensuring that all admissions decisions are made in accordance with University procedures and policy, including those relating to Equal Opportunities and Disabilities.

- g) To liaise with the Research Office about supervisory arrangements.
- h) To act on behalf of the School in the operation of the transfer procedures, including the conduct of Transfer Interviews.
- i) To co-ordinate and disseminate the School's programme of research training.
- j) To co-ordinate on behalf of the School the Annual Progress Review including training, and to provide in a timely fashion an Annual Overview Report to the University REKTC.
- k) To endorse all nominations for examiners on behalf of the School.
- l) To act as a point of referral for issues and problems relating to research degrees that cannot be resolved satisfactorily by the supervisors.
- m) To act on behalf of the School in the operation of Annexe F procedures.
- n) To represent the School on the University REKTC.
- o) To assist the Dean of School in providing access to an adequate research environment for both part-time and full-time students.
- p) To contribute to appropriate levels of research leadership within the School in accordance with the University's responsibilities under its Code of Research Good Practice.

7.10 The responsibilities of the Director of Studies

- a) The Director of Studies has overall responsibility for the academic supervision and training of the research degree student, including progress monitoring and Annual Progress Review.
- b) The Director of Studies may be assisted by other members of the supervisory team and is responsible for the direction of the supervisory team in its approach to the supervision of the student.
- c) The Director of Studies is responsible for the effective operation of the team supervision model in respect of each individual student, including conformity with guidelines specifying one meeting per term of the full team with the student present, and one meeting per year (normally within the scope of the Annual Progress Review) of the full team without the student present.
- d) In liaison with the Dean of School (or Head of Department), the Director of Studies shall ensure that the University meets its obligations to the student in terms of the entitlement to supervisory input across the duration of the programme of study (in accordance with the University specification for 36 hours per year (full-time) or 24 hours per year (part-time) of team supervisory input.

- e) The (prospective) Director of Studies shall be responsible for conducting the admission procedures in accordance with University policy and process.
- f) The Director of Studies is responsible for inducting students into their research studies and the immediate research community, as well as facilitating access where appropriate to relevant external centres and networks.
- g) The Director of Studies is responsible for specifying, during the initial stages of supervision each year, the training requirements for the current year using the University Research Training Programme and the Research Skills Training Log. In doing so, the Director of Studies will take into account any prior learning or experience that the candidate has obtained including acceptable formal teaching qualifications.
- h) The Director of Studies is also responsible for delivering those elements of research training, as designated in the University's Research Training Programme, for delivery at supervisor level.
- i) The Director of Studies is also responsible for reporting on progress with the training at the end of each year in the Annual Progress Review.
- j) The Director of Studies is responsible for ensuring that the student is made aware at commencement as to the University expectations in relation to progress and completion, and for setting out of the timetable of milestones for registration, transfer and submission.
- k) The Director of Studies is responsible for ensuring as part of the induction process that the student understands the working of the team supervision system, including the distinct roles on the team of each individual supervisor, and has an indication of when in the programme the expertise of each supervisor will become relevant. The Director of Studies is responsible for notifying the student without delay of any changes to the dynamics, roles, and responsibilities within the supervisory team, and for initiating the necessary approval procedures for such changes.
- l) As research degrees are extended programmes of independent study, the Director of Studies is not responsible for the detailed timetable of work, which is the proper responsibility of the student, but is responsible for notifying the student immediately where it becomes evident that progress is not satisfactory in relation to the University's expectations. The Director of Studies is also responsible for invoking the formal procedures for addressing the problem in accordance with the University's Research Degree Regulations.
- m) The Director of Studies is responsible for the initial investigation of issues raised by the student in relation to supervision, or the provision of services, facilities or resources, and for referring such matters onward as appropriate, where an immediate resolution is not possible.
- n) The Director of Studies bears an ongoing responsibility throughout the period of registration for ensuring in the case of each individual student that all the necessary

budgetary approvals are in place before any commitments to expenditure are undertaken by the student.

- o) The Director of Studies is responsible for the conduct of the formal Annual Progress Review for each individual student they supervise, including consultation with other members of the supervisory team.
- p) The Director of Studies is responsible for undertaking staff development and training in accordance with current University policy.

7.11 The responsibilities of the Second Supervisor (or co-Supervisor)

- a) Second Supervisors are responsible, under the team supervision system, for assisting the supervision effort in accordance with the particular role identified for each individual in the team, and for ensuring that their individual role is understood by the student.
- b) Each co-supervisor is responsible for attending such plenary supervision meetings as shall be called by the Director of Studies.
- c) Each co-supervisor is responsible for bringing to the attention of the Director of Studies any issue for resolution which may be raised by the student.
- d) Each co-supervisor is responsible for attending supervisory training and for subsequently undertaking update sessions or other development sessions, in accordance with current University policy.
- e) Each co-supervisor is responsible for providing any necessary input into the Annual Progress Review.

7.12 The responsibilities of the student

- a) To recognise that the progress of their research is primarily their own responsibility and to sustain the initial commitment made by embarking on a research degree, by approaching their work with the necessary diligence to produce a timely and successful completion.
- b) To be responsible, under the guidance of the supervisory team, for the progress of their own work including prompt completion of all the academic key stages.
- c) To understand and to comply with the University's research regulatory framework and research good practice framework, as well as the wider external expectations in relation to research good practice.
- d) To understand and comply with the policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the University generally.

- e) To comply in a timely fashion with University and School requirements including those for enrolment and re-enrolment, registration, Annual Progress Review, transfer and submission.
- f) To maintain an adequate frequency of contact with supervisors in accordance with the needs of the research and as agreed in the initial stages of supervision, and to ensure that they respond within a reasonable period to communications from supervisors, failure to comply with which may be deemed to indicate unsatisfactory performance.
- g) To adhere to timetables and deadlines for work or other relevant activity, including ensuring that they undertake adequate preparation for meetings, that they submit work on time and generally maintain satisfactory progress with the research.
- h) To undertake any teaching or other academic duties as determined, and to engage in any development or training activities in relation to these duties as shall be required.
- i) To maintain at all times appropriate conduct and academic performance as required under the University's regulatory framework.
- j) To attend, participate in and undertake any assessment as determined by the Director of Studies in relation to research training.
- k) To be familiar with all relevant institutional regulations, policies, professional and ethical codes.
- l) To have an adequate understanding of the purpose and operation of the University's team supervision system, including an understanding of the range of roles undertaken within the team, and an appreciation that each supervisor in the team is not equally active with the other at all points in the programme.
- m) To be responsible for ensuring that any problems are raised in the appropriate quarter in a timely fashion, and are not allowed to drift. This includes bringing to the attention of the Director of Studies any issue or problem which is affecting the progress of the research or, if the matter cannot be discussed with the supervisors, for raising it with the appropriate member of staff in the School whether PhD Tutor, Head of Doctoral Programme or School Research Director. If the problem remains unresolved following these steps, the student is responsible for contacting the Research Degrees Manager.
- n) To undertake research training in accordance with the University Research Training Programme.
- o) To pay such fees as shall be required by the University.
- p) To participate in surveys commissioned from time to time by the University to inform quality enhancement (for example, the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey [PRES] of the Higher Education Academy).
- q) To maintain adequate levels of contact with the appropriate departments of the

University.

7.13 The responsibilities of the examiners

- a) The examiners are responsible for the fair and proper conduct of the examination and all associated procedures in accordance with the University's requirements, whilst upholding the academic standards in accordance with national expectations for work at this level. They are also responsible for providing clear and adequate feedback to students, and for demonstrating auditable decision-making in the light of the University criteria for the award of research degrees and of national standards, through the content of their reports and the recommendations reached.
- b) The internal examiner is normally responsible for the checking and approval of minor amendments where the decision of the examiners has been to award the degree subject to minor amendments being made to the thesis.

7.14 The role of the assessor

The assessor has no formal or management responsibilities in relation to their role in research degree registration and progression but acts at the request of the REKTC as an agent of peer review at the key stages of Registration and Transfer. The primary responsibilities of the Assessor are:

- a) To read and to provide comments upon Applications to Register including accompanying research proposals.
- b) To read and to provide comments upon Applications to Transfer, including commenting upon the Progress Report and, where required, participating in Transfer Interviews.
- c) To act in a timely fashion in providing comments, in the interests of both the student and the University.

7.15 The responsibilities of the Rapporteur

The Rapporteur has no formal or management responsibilities in relation to research degrees. The primary responsibilities in the Rapporteur role are:

- a) To act as a conduit between the assessor and REKTC formulating the assessor's comments into specific recommendations in accordance with the research degrees process for consideration by the REKTC.
- b) To assist in maintaining academic standards by supporting the assessment and approval process for applications for progression from research degree students.
- c) To act in a timely fashion, in the interests both of the student and the University.

Part 8

Teaching and other academic duties undertaken by research degree students

- 8.1 The University recognises that the development of skills, including those acquired through teaching and other associated academic duties, is desirable in terms of personal development and is an important element in preparing research students for an academic or other career.
- 8.2 The University considers it essential that the interests of all students (both research students undertaking teaching duties and the students they are teaching) are taken into account, through the provision of a policy and training framework which seeks to balance the doctoral research with the teaching activities and associated training and also ensures that research students are adequately prepared through training and support to be competent and effective teachers. This section sets out the University's framework and policy on training in teaching, and provides for best practice expectations for Schools in managing teaching activities undertaken by research students.
- 8.3 The University considers that the generic skills developed through this training are of benefit to all research students regardless of mode of study or intended career. Consequently all research students are required to undertake some form of training for teaching. Depending on the type, timing and volume of teaching activity, individual students will undertake one or more of the two training routes offered by the University. These are:
- a. The Certificate of Special Study in Supporting Learning (UT5a)

A practice-based programme starting in October and December each year, for students undertaking six hours per week of teaching and associated activity and having at least 15 hours of face to face teaching in their teaching timetable. Two routes are available on this programme: either the full Pg Cert SSSL which confers Higher Education Academy accreditation for Associate status, or the Certificate of Completion, a lighter touch programme with no award. The programme is delivered wholly online with access to a series of parallel workshops open to all who teach.

- b. Introductory Workshops in Teaching and Learning (UT5b)

A two-day workshop providing an introduction to teaching and learning. Workshops are held in the first year of study and are compulsory for all students, full- and part-time. Students attending this programme in their first year may subsequently be required to or may elect to attend the Pg Cert SSSL when they acquire the relevant levels of teaching activity.

All students will be required to attend the introductory workshop within their first year. Students having attended the introductory workshops who subsequently acquire more significant teaching activity sufficient to qualify for the Certificate of

Special Study must additionally undertake this programme at the earliest opportunity. Any student who, at any stage in their studies, meets the criterion of a minimum of 15 hours per year of contact hours may undertake the Certificate of Special Study.

8.4 The overarching framework, principles and good practice set out in this policy apply to full-time and part-time students alike (but not to external study students as they are not based primarily in the UK). Owing to the particular patterns of study of part-time students, it is recommended that where they are either undertaking or considering undertaking teaching or other academic duties, Directors of Studies should refer to the Research Office or School Research Directors for advice on best practice. However the University policy on teaching for training as set out in 8.3 above should normally be implemented.

8.5 The overarching University framework is set out below:

- (i) In the interests of ensuring clarity from the outset and managing expectations realistically, Schools should publish clear information about how they manage teaching activity undertaken by research students. This information should be made available in marketing and applicant information and discussed at interview.
- (ii) Full-time or part-time students are not permitted to undertake any form of teaching (or teaching related academic duties, including contact, preparation and assessment) in their first semester.
- (iii) Full-time research students are not permitted to undertake more than six hours per week (180 hours per year), of teaching other academic duties, or administrative work, in alignment with external guidance and best practice. The six-hour weekly maximum is defined as inclusive of contact, preparation and assessment time. Attendance at teacher training classes and other obligations associated with training are additional to the teaching hours allocated to students.
- (iv) In assigning teaching duties, Schools should actively consider the optimum balance between the acquisition of teaching experience by research students and the timely completion of their research.
- (v) Students must undergo appropriate training for teaching within the context of the University Research Training Programme, as set out in 8.3 above (exemptions may be made only in respect of students holding acceptable formal teaching qualifications).
- (vi) In the case of Scholarships with a teaching element and Teaching Assistantships, the contractual status of the student will be determined by the scholarship agreement which must be signed prior to commencement.
- (vii) In the interests of timely and successful completion of the MPhil or PhD,

students are actively discouraged from taking up any additional employment, within or outside the University.

8.6 Within the overarching framework, Schools should include the following best practice within their approach:

- (i) Make available to applicants for research degree places guidance about how they allocate and manage teaching activity by research students, including information on the likely availability of teaching opportunities, as well as the range of duties which may be included, from preparatory work, class teaching, seminars, laboratory demonstration, marking and similar work through to administration.
- (ii) The published information provided to applicants should clearly distinguish between studentships where teaching is a requirement, and those where it may not be possible to guarantee the availability of teaching opportunities for research students.
- (iii) Students should be made aware when attending the two-day introductory Teaching and Learning Workshops, that there is no automatic translation of training into teaching hours.
- (iv) Issues around teaching should be explicitly addressed at the admissions interview in a dialogue covering applicant expectations and aspirations, and the availability of teaching opportunities and University training requirements and provision. Where teaching opportunities cannot be guaranteed, this should be made clear to applicants. Any offer of a place following interview should make explicit the position in relation to any teaching including the terms and conditions on which the teaching would be undertaken.
- (v) The University advises as best practice that Schools should ensure that the six hours maximum time allocation, stipulated above, in respect of full-time students includes associated activities such as preparation and marking. This would comply with the University best practice of providing a balance between graduate research studies and academic or other work experience. By following best practice Schools will be consistent in following external guidance, and therefore implementing the University policy of ensuring the timely completion of studies.
- (vi) Research students who are undertaking teaching are subject to the provisions of their School for ensuring the quality of that teaching. The continuation or renewal of the offer of teaching shall be subject to satisfactory performance as assessed annually by the School.
- (vii) Students undertaking teaching will be managed through the structures which exist in their School or Department for this purpose, whether the Module Leader, then Course Leader, then Head of Department.

- (viii) School policies on teaching undertaken by research students should provide clear routes for students to refer any issues or problems, with provision for involvement of the School Research Director where necessary.
- (ix) Schools should ensure that students, supervisors and Heads of Department maintain current and accurate records of research student teaching activity. Schools will be asked for reports from time to time to inform planning and monitoring of teacher training provision.

Part 9

Student Services for research degree students

- 9.1 The University recognises the importance of the role played by its professional support services in helping students to fulfil their potential and to make good and timely progress. The student services make a significant contribution to the overall quality of the student experience, including the ability of the student to exploit the learning opportunities available through the University.
- 9.2 The University is committed to providing a comprehensive range of services to further this aim, and these are open to all students. These include: Accommodation; Career Development Centre; Chaplaincy; Counselling and Advice; Computing Resources; Disability Learning Support; Health Service; Library Services; Sport and Recreation; Student Finance and Scholarships; Students' Union.
- 9.3 Through its research management structures the University will work with these services to develop provision specific to research degree students where appropriate and to facilitate take-up of these services by research degree students.

Part 10

External Research Degree Study Scheme (ERDS)

- 10.1 Students on the ERDS scheme are subject to the responsibilities set out in Section 7.12, which apply regardless of the mode of study. In addition, the following specific responsibilities exist for ERDS students.
- 10.2 ERDS students are responsible for familiarising themselves and complying with all the documents and information provided by the Research Office prior to and at the point of enrolment, as these constitute the regulatory and procedural framework under which they will be working, regardless of the physical location where the work is being conducted.
- 10.3 ERDS students will be accepted by the University only with the appropriate assurances as to the availability of adequate resources (including time), facilities and support from their home institution or employer throughout the period of study.
- 10.4 The University will accept onto the ERDS scheme only those students who have means of rapid and regular communication with supervisors. These will normally include telephone, fax and email.
- 10.5 The ERDS scheme includes a requirement that candidates spend a minimum period in each calendar year in residence at the University of Westminster, and candidates will only be accepted on the basis of evidence of the availability of the necessary time and resource to meet this requirement. The University's minimum residence requirement is 2 months in each calendar year, in respect of each year of programme, but individual Schools may have in-residence requirements in excess of the University minimum, to which their students will be subject.
- 10.6 ERDS students shall undertake appropriate research training and development activities as determined by the Director of Studies during the initial stages of supervision, and as set down in a personal development plan and a Research Skills Training Log.
- 10.7 The timetable for in-residence periods shall be determined in agreement with the Director of Studies, in order to ensure that the necessary levels of student access to supervisors and facilities, as well as to training and development opportunities are secured. This will normally involve the student attending induction and enrolment at the University in September/October in the year of their commencement.
- 10.8 It is the responsibility of ERDS students to ensure they are available, in a timely fashion, prior to (re-)enrolment at the beginning of each academic year to agree a work-plan for the forthcoming year in conjunction with their Director of Studies. The plan of work should indicate clearly which periods in the forthcoming year will be spent at the University and which in their country of domicile, and shall meet the

in-residence requirements referred to in 10.5 above.

- 10.9 It is the responsibility of the student to undertake in advance the full payment of travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses for supervisory visits to their country of domicile, which should normally occur at least once in each calendar year. The purpose of the supervisory visit is to allow detailed and extensive discussion regarding the progress of the research study. The duration of each supervisory visit shall be determined by the supervisor in accordance with the requirement that the University satisfy itself as to the facilities, environment and progress with the research.
- 10.10 ERDS students are charged tuition fees on a *pro rata* basis per month and are calculated on the basis of time spent at the University of Westminster (full-time Overseas Rate) plus periods of study in their country of domicile (External Overseas Rate), and finally supervisory travel and subsistence expenses (to be agreed and paid prior to travel at enrolment each year).

Part 11

Policy on Research Degree Admissions and Research Environment

- 11.1 The University's Code of Practice requires that students should be admitted only where they can be trained and supervised in an environment which is supportive of research and where the necessary resources (including supervision) for a timely and successful completion exist and can reasonably be predicted to continue to exist for the duration of the registration. The Dean of School is responsible for providing appropriate procedures for ensuring that adequate supervisory and other resources exist before each individual admission is approved by the School. This policy seeks to define an appropriate research environment and to articulate the University's position in relation to research degree admissions and research environment, whilst recognising the diversity of School structures for managing research and research students and the existence of developing areas (provided that these are supported within the context of School and University Research and Knowledge Transfer strategies).
- 11.2 Students may only be recruited to areas which are judged by the University to have an appropriate research environment.
- 11.3 The research environment is defined as an environment which is supportive of research in terms of the number of staff and students engaged in research, the quality and currency of the research being undertaken by staff, access to appropriate library and information resources, access to the necessary equipment and facilities for the project, access to research training and appropriate supervision.
- 11.4 An appropriate research environment shall be defined as one where the following criteria are met:

a) Supervision

A critical mass of normally a minimum of four members of academic staff who:

- i) In the context of the University's team supervision arrangements, have the necessary expertise and are adequately qualified in terms of combined experience of successful research degree supervision under the University Research Degree Regulations, and
- ii) Could reasonably participate in the supervision if necessary in terms of their capacity in the light of:
 - their existing load and other commitments and
 - the student minimum supervisory input entitlement, and;
- iii) Can reasonably expect to sustain supervision through to completion, and
- iv) Either have been or are being submitted to the Research Assessment

Exercise (RAE)/Research Excellence Framework (REF) or have a developing research profile equating to RAE/REF definitions of at least national recognition.

b) Research Training Provision

Provision of or access to the appropriate training as defined in the University Research Training Programme.

c) Research Community and Culture

Access to a body of individuals and activities relevant to the research area.

d) Facilities

Provision of or access to the minimum facilities necessary for the research.

e) Resources:

- (i) Provision of or access to the information resources necessary for the research
- (ii) Provision of or access to sustained and appropriate supervision
- (iii) Provision of or access to any other resources necessary for the research

11.5 The point at which the interests of prospective students in relation to research environment can most effectively be secured is at the point of admission. In recommending admission, Deans and School Research Directors are responsible for making an assessment on the basis of the criteria above and the University shall ensure that the criteria are met before proceeding with the admission.

11.6 The University will monitor the research environment on the basis of information provided by the Schools including:

- (i) the annual report (School overview report) from School Research Directors (part of the Annual Progress Review), and
- (ii) the record of annual research output entered in the Institutional Online Repository; WestminsterResearch

11.7 Judgments as to the adequacy of the research environment will take into account the diversity which exists within the Schools in respect of research organisational structures and individual subject areas and will ultimately be determined by the University Research, Enterprise and Knowledge Transfer Committee (REKTC).

11.8 Where in developing or emerging areas which are supported within the context of School and University Research, Enterprise and Knowledge Transfer strategy, the research environment criteria are not yet fully met, the University will consider admitting students where it is satisfied that appropriate arrangements exist for secure and sustainable supervision, for appropriate research training that accords with University Research Training Programme and for accessing the other elements of the appropriate research environment through links or collaborations.

11.9 In support of areas falling into paragraph 11.8 above, the University will assist by providing guidance and support on the development of the research environment.

Part 12

Research Degree Supervisor Training

12.1 This section sets out the University's main policy provisions governing the experience, training and development of research degree supervisors under its research degree framework.

12.2 The minimum criteria for a research degree supervision team are:

- a) At least one supervisor shall have had experience of supervising candidates to the successful completion of a UK research degree (or equivalent).
- b) In the case of a PhD, one of the supervisors shall have successfully supervised at PhD level.
- c) A supervision team shall normally have had combined experience of supervising not fewer than two candidates to successful completion.
- d) Where there is no previous research degree experience, the appropriateness and currency will be established through scrutiny of the C.V. and in particular of the research record.
- e) All staff who supervise research degree students will have appropriate training in supervisory methods.

12.3 Roles and responsibilities with regard to supervisor training are:

- a) The University is responsible for ensuring that all staff who supervise research degree students will have appropriate training. Research Degrees Sub Committee is responsible for keeping under review the provision of appropriate training for research degree supervisors.
- b) The Dean of School is responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of the School's arrangements for the supervision of research degree students, including the arrangements for the selection, training and continuing professional development of supervisors in accordance with University policy.
- c) The Director of Studies and co-supervisors are responsible for undertaking training and continuing professional development in accordance with current University policy.

12.4 Subject to the primary consideration for student progress and the student experience, the University considers it important that new and inexperienced supervisors are developed. It seeks to achieve this through the team supervision model, which provides scope for mentoring by those with greater experience, within a supportive and regulated process and under the overview of the School Research Director.

12.5 The University has established a range of supervisory training options which include:

- a) Half-day briefings targeted to staff new to supervision and focussing on research degree process.
 - b) Update briefings following major reviews of research degree process.
 - c) The *Supervising Student Research* Module (from the University's MA in Higher Education). Passing this module is countable as one completion for purposes of calculating team experience, where one or more of the other supervisor/s in the team has/have supervised one or more students to successful completion).
 - d) Supervision and mentoring activity within the scope of the Team Supervision Model and the School Research Director overview.
 - e) *Ad hoc* provision including events at School or University level on general or specific topics.
- 12.6 In addition to internal institutional and School-level provision, the University and its Schools will disseminate information regarding external development opportunities.
- 12.7 The adequacy of supervisory experience and training in relation to individual students will be evaluated through the admissions and registration process and monitored annually through the Annual Progress Review of Research Degrees.
- 12.8 Schools should ensure the adequacy of the training undertaken by supervisors on an ongoing basis by monitoring, encouraging and facilitating supervisory development through the promotion of a wide range of training and development options, both internal and external.
- 12.9 The University will keep under review the effectiveness of its supervisor training policy and provision through the Research Degrees Sub Committee and the Schools, taking into consideration:
- a) Information in the Annual Review of Research Degrees (reports from School Research Directors).
 - b) Monitoring of staff attendance through provision of lists to Deans and School Research Directors.
 - c) Feedback from research degree students.
 - d) Progression and completion rates of research degree students.
 - e) Inclusion as a standard item on the Research Degrees Sub Committee agenda.

Part 13

Full-Time Staff undertaking research degrees at Westminster

- 13.1 The University's Research, Enterprise and Knowledge Transfer Strategy supports growth in research at Westminster and the University encourages its staff to develop their research activity, including undertaking research degrees. However, the University recognises the need to address the issue of delay in progression and completion which often arises from the competing claims of their duties as academic staff and obligations as research degree students where full-time academic staff undertake a research degree at their own university.
- 13.2 Consequently, and save in the most exceptional of circumstances, the presumption shall be in all cases of full-time academic staff wishing to register for a research degree, *either* that this be undertaken externally *or* that they follow the internal 'published work' route (see Part 14 of this Code).
- 13.3 This policy applies only to full-time academic staff, but not to part-time staff (including the recently absorbed PTVLs) or to Research Assistants.
- 13.4 Other than in the case of the Doctorate in Professional Education studies, where it is recognised that internal supervision is the most appropriate approach, any variation from this policy requires the specific approval of the Research Degrees Sub Committee and of the Chair of the Research Degrees Sub Committee. Indicatively, exceptional circumstances might include instances where appropriate supervision is not available outside the University.

Part 14

Research Degrees by Published Work

- 14.1 The University Research Degree Regulations permit the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy or Doctor of Philosophy on the basis of previously published work, and special regulatory and procedural provisions apply for candidates pursuing the award by published work. Notwithstanding the variations from standard research degree process and regulations, and the fact that in the case of candidates on the Published Work route the research has already been undertaken, all participants in candidatures for degrees by published work, both internal and external, are required to abide by the principles laid down in this Code insofar as they are applicable to this route. The Special Regulations governing this study route may be found in Section 17 of the *Regulations*.

Annexe A

General administrative arrangements for research degrees

The University's general administrative arrangements for research degrees and research student administration are set out below.

Academic Council

The terms of reference of Academic Council cover:

A1 "General issues relating to:

- the research, scholarship, teaching and courses at the University, including criteria for the admission of students
- the appointment and removal of internal and external examiners
- policies and procedures for assessment and examination of the academic performance of students
- the content of the curriculum
- academic standards and the validation and review of courses
- the procedures for the award of qualifications and honorary academic titles
- the procedures for the exclusion of students for academic reasons

A2 Consideration of the development of the academic activities of the University and the resources needed to support them and the provision of advice thereon to the [Vice-Chancellor and] Rector and to the Court of Governors.

A3 Provision of advice on such matters as the Court of Governors or the [Vice Chancellor and] Rector may refer to Academic Council.

A4 Where these responsibilities include research and research degrees, the Academic Council has delegated authority to the University REKTC, which is responsible for consideration of issues in relation to academic standards and quality of provision for research degrees, including admissions; assessment; progression; conferment and exclusion; appointment of internal and external examiners; overview of resources and research environment; and training and development.

The University Research, Enterprise and Knowledge Transfer Committee

A5 The University fosters, supports and manages its research provision through the University REKTC which has delegated authority from the Academic Council of the University for approving the registration, progression and examination arrangements for research students; for the monitoring of the progress of research degree students; and for the promotion, co-ordination and monitoring of their education and training.

A6 The University REKTC is the mechanism by which the University oversees and

manages its research degree provision, as well as making decisions on student progression and conferment. It is the role of this Committee to ensure that before it admits a research degree student it has satisfied itself that appropriate supervision and facilities can be provided and that, at each critical stage in the progress towards the degree, academic quality and standards will be maintained. At each of these stages the University REKTC makes decisions regarding student progress in the light of comments and recommendations from expert assessors and senior academic staff, and also oversees the Annual Progress Review.

The University's Academic Structure

- A7** The University is structured into seven academic Schools, each covering a specific range of subject areas, and Westminster Exchange, the University's specialist centre for teaching and learning. Research students are enrolled in a named School responsible for the co-ordination and management of research degree provision. Academic delivery within the Schools is the responsibility of the Dean of School, but within each School many of the responsibilities relating to research management, including research degrees, are delegated to the School Research Director. The operation of the procedures in relation to the regulatory framework, the assurance of quality and standards, student assessment, progression and conferment are the responsibility of the Research Office.

Research Degree Administration

- A8** The management of Research Degrees at the University level is the responsibility of the University Research Office located in the Academic Services Department, which has institution-wide responsibilities for research degree administration from enquiries through to conferments, and for the operation of the University policies and procedures for the assurance of quality and standards. The Research Office also provides support for research policy development, the continuous review and enhancement of the regulatory framework and the provision of secretariat support for a range of committees associated with the University's management of research. Specifically it supports the work and enacts the decisions of the University REKTC and its sub committees.

School-level arrangements for the management of research degree activity

- A9** Individual schools should have effective structures and procedures in place for the consideration of and management of matters relating to research degree provision, which will include the School Research, Enterprise and Knowledge Transfer Committee. In particular there should be a clear locus of responsibility for matters relating to admissions procedures, student performance and the Annual Progress Review. This will be achieved through the establishment of appropriate School-level structures and mechanisms for the management of research degrees and related matters.
- A10** The University values the student voice and has clear and transparent processes and structures to secure student representation. Student feedback is provided

through the Research Students' Forum, Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) and other formal and informal mechanisms by which the student view can be expressed and considered. Student membership of School REKTC is not considered appropriate, owing to the prominence of research student performance and progression issues within the remit of such committees.

The Research Students' Forum

- A11** Representation for the University's research student community is provided through the University's Research Students' Forum (RSF). The RSF operates through meetings of a core Student Representatives' Panel (SRP) with representation for each School, together with relevant academic and professional support staff. The core panel considers formal business including; consultations on proposed policy changes; annual monitoring material from the School Overview Reports and the student feedback from PRES. The RSF holds open meetings, to which all research students, supervisors and School Research Directors are invited. These open meetings provide opportunities for networking with staff and other students and for the collection and follow up of more broadly- based feedback on the student experience. From time to time students may organise University-wide social events via the Forum. The RSF also maintains an online presence on Facebook to facilitate wider engagement and networking.
- A12** The University actively encourages student participation in these activities of representation which develop valuable skills and provide opportunities for students to access a wider community of peers. The composition, current membership and terms of reference may be found at: <http://www.wmin.ac.uk/researchstudentsforum>

Annexe B

Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) National Qualifications Framework

Descriptor for qualifications at Doctoral (D) level: Doctoral degree

Doctorates are awarded to students who have demonstrated:

- i) 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;
- ii) a systematic acquisition and understanding of a substantial body of knowledge which is at the forefront of an academic discipline or area of professional practice;
- iii) 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;
- iv) a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

Typically, holders of the qualification will be able to:

- a) make informed judgments on complex issues in specialist fields, often in the absence of complete data, and be able to communicate their ideas and conclusions clearly and effectively to specialist and non-specialist audiences;
- b) 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:

- c) 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.

Annexe C

Joint Statement of the Research Councils' Skills Training Requirements for Research Students

Website address:

<http://www.westminster.ac.uk/study/rs/key-documents/university-research-training-programme>

Research Training Policy and Programme

Website address:

<http://www.westminster.ac.uk/study/rs/key-documents/university-research-training-programme>

Annexe D

Other essential reading

This Code of Practice is to be read in conjunction with the following policies and Codes of Practice which together constitute the University's research degree framework and by which all participants in research degree activity are also bound:

- Essential Westminster
- University of Westminster Regulations for the Award of the Degrees of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy
- University of Westminster Guidelines for Research Degree Students
- University Code of Practice Governing the Ethical Conduct of Research
- University of Westminster Code of Research Good Practice
- University of Westminster Research Training Programme

These documents may be accessed by visiting:

<http://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/rs/key-documents>

Annexe E

Acknowledgements

In developing this Code of Practice, reference has been made to the following:

QAA Revised Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes (September 2004)

Joint Statement of the Research Councils' Skills Training Requirements for Research Students

Codes of Practice of the following UK HEIs: Lancaster University; Keele University, Kings College, London; University of Surrey; University of Kent at Canterbury; Cardiff University; University of Salford; University of Newcastle upon Tyne; Edge Hill College of Higher Education; Heythrop College, University of London; University of Exeter.