

A Day for Supervisors

Session One: Overview of PhD Programme Regulations and Key Processes

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Session Structure

- ▶ The Context of Doctoral Education in the UK
- ▶ Academic Regulations for Research Degrees - Principles
- ▶ Annual Progress Reviews (APRs) within the Regulations
- ▶ Annual Progress Reviews (APRs) in practice (the role of the Supervisor and the Assessor)
- ▶ Supervisory Support after Final Submission of Thesis (Viva and Post Viva)
- ▶ The Role of the Supervisor within Doctoral Researcher Professional Development

The Context of Doctoral Education in the UK

- ▶ From individual research to the ‘doctoral research programme’
- ▶ Founding of UKCGE 1994
- ▶ Researcher Development Framework from Vitae (2010)
- ▶ Research Council block funding - first Doctoral Training Partnerships (DTPs) began in 2014
- ▶ Graduate School at Westminster founded 2012
- ▶ One indicator of success - completion rates. From 11% in some areas of the university before 2012 to a current institutional completion rate of above 70%
- ▶ Relation between individual research and training programmes?

Academic Regulations for Research Degrees - Principles (1)

- ▶ Covers the awards of:
 - ▶ Masters of Philosophy (MPhil)
 - ▶ Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
 - ▶ Doctor of Philosophy by Published Work (PhD)
 - ▶ Professional Doctorates (DProf)
 - ▶ Higher Doctorates
- ▶ Derived from:
 - ▶ QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education: Research Degrees
 - ▶ QAA Doctoral Degree Characteristics Statement
 - ▶ UKRI Terms and Conditions for Funded Research Degree Students
 - ▶ University of Westminster's Research Governance Framework (Research Code of Good Practice, Research Ethics, Research Misconduct)
 - ▶ To be read in conjunction with the Research Degrees Handbook

Academic Regulations for Research Degrees - Principles (2)

- ▶ Requirements for Admission and Enrolment
- ▶ Supervision
- ▶ Annual Progression Reviews (including Remediation)
- ▶ Examination and Post Examination Arrangements
- ▶ Mitigating Circumstances, Suspensions, Deferral of Examination, Withdrawals and Exclusions
- ▶ Appeals

Academic Regulations for Research Degrees - Principles - Supervision (1)

- ▶ B3.2 A research degree candidate shall have at least two and normally not more than three supervisors.
- ▶ B3.3 The supervisory team must hold two successful completions of a UK research degree (or equivalent) at the academic level of the programme to be supervised, eg in the case of a Doctoral award, the completions must be at the doctoral level. Where appropriate approved supervisor training at the University of Westminster has been undertaken one completion may be deemed sufficient.
- ▶ B3.4 One supervisor shall be the Director of Studies (first supervisor) who shall be an employee of the University and who shall be responsible for:
 - ▶ The regular and frequent supervision of the candidate;
 - ▶ ensuring that a formal record of supervision contact is maintained by the candidate;
 - ▶ Ensuring that the candidate is supported and guided in the preparation of Annual Progress Reviews, progress in research training and development and preparation for the thesis submission and oral examinations (viva).

Academic Regulations for Research Degrees - Principles - Supervision (2)

- ▶ B3.5 In addition to the supervisors, an advisor or advisors may be proposed to contribute some specialised knowledge or to provide a link with an external organisation.
- ▶ B3.9 Each full-time research candidate is entitled to a minimum of 36 hours per annum of input from their supervisory team, though in practice, levels and nature of supervisory input may be greater to reflect both the changing needs of the candidate and the demands of the project at different stages during enrolment. For part-time candidates, the entitlement is 24 hours per annum. It is the responsibility of the Head of College or nominee to ensure that staff timetables allow for this level of input.
- ▶ B3.10A candidate can expect to receive a minimum of six recorded supervisory sessions per academic year if on a full-time pathway, and a minimum of three supervisory sessions per academic year if on a part time pathway. In addition, the candidate can expect at least one meeting per annum with the whole supervisor team.

Annual Progress Reviews (APRs) within the Regulations (1)

- ▶ B5.2 Full-time candidates must submit a formal Annual Progression Review each year. Part-time candidates must submit a formal APR biennially with intermediate Supervisor Review meetings in the intervening years.

| Year of Enrolment | Full Time Mode | Part Time Mode | PhD by Published Work (see Section C) |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Year 1 | APR 1 | NA | NA |
| Year 2 | APR 2 | APR 1 | NA |
| Year 3 | APR 3 | NA | NA |
| Year 4 | APR 4 | APR 2 | NA |
| Year 5 | N/A | NA | NA |
| Year 6 | N/A | APR 3 | NA |
| Year 7 | N/A | NA | NA |
| Year 8 | N/A | APR 4 | NA |

Full details of the expectations for each review are included in the Research Degrees Handbook. APRs are normally submitted on 1 May for September entrants and 1 October for January entrants.

Annual Progress Reviews (APRs) within the Regulations (2)

- ▶ APR 1, APR 2, APR 3 - student submits APR, reviewed by Director of Studies, progressed to an independent Assessor (internal to the University, but external to the supervisory team) and approved by the School Doctoral Co-Ordinator and RDPC/GSB.
- ▶ APR 2 is considered the upgrade APR and includes a viva.
- ▶ APR 4 is a pre-submission check and does not include an independent assessor.
- ▶ For MPhil Only, APR 3 is not required.
- ▶ Outcomes of APR 1, APR 2 or APR 3 can be Progress or Remediation
- ▶ Outcome of APR 4 can be Pass or Progress to final submission with the implementation of a support plan.

Annual Progress Reviews (APRs) within the Regulations (3)

- ▶ Remediation will be for a period of 3 months or 6 months (APR 2 only).
- ▶ Outcome of Remediation can be:
 - ▶ Progress
 - ▶ Progress but as MPhil Only (APR 2 and APR 3 only)
 - ▶ Not Progress and Exclude

“B5.8 All judgments and assessments as to the adequacy of progress will be made in relation to the rate of progress and quality of performance required for a successful completion within the maximum period of enrolment for the award in question. Such judgments shall be evidence-based...”

Annual Progress Reviews (APRs) in Practice (the role of the Supervisor and the Assessor)

- ▶ What are APRs for?
- ▶ What kinds of support do students need?
- ▶ False positives are not helpful in the long term!
- ▶ How to manage the assessor's report
- ▶ How to see remediation
- ▶ How to be a good assessor!

Supervisory Support after Final Submission of the Thesis (Viva and Post Viva) (1)

- ▶ B8.2 At least three months prior to the proposed date of submission of the thesis for examination, the Director of Studies shall propose the arrangements for the candidate's examination for the approval by the Graduate School Board (GSB). Where the submission for approval of examination arrangements is received later than three months prior to the proposed date for oral examination, the GSB may require that the proposed oral examination date be postponed. **in practice the DoS nominates the external and may suggest an internal, but this will progress to the School Doctoral Co-Ordinator (who will also normally be the Chair) for approval (and then to GSB).*
- ▶ B8.16 The candidate's Director of Studies or other Supervisor should not attend, unless the candidate has given their permission. The proposed attendance of a Supervisor should be advised in advance through the Chair of the Examiners. If present, the Director of Studies or Supervisor should enter and leave the room at the same time as the candidate and should participate in the discussion only if asked to provide clarification on a specific matter by the Examiners.

Supervisory Support after Final Submission of the Thesis (Viva and Post Viva) (2)

- ▶ It is absolutely certain that the student will be nervous!
- ▶ The supervisory team should always offer the student a mock viva
- ▶ It is the student's decision whether supervisors attend the viva or not
- ▶ What are the possible outcomes of the viva?
- ▶ It is useful to be there to have a clear sense of what examiners have said should there be revisions or amendments needed.
- ▶ Do celebrate with your student!
- ▶ Supervision should continue through the period of revision or amendment, and if the decision is resubmission.

* Covid -19 Support

- ▶ Flexible use of Mitigating Circumstances for APR submission, APR remediation submission, Post-Viva amendments.
- ▶ Extensions to registration end date available for those due to submit before 31st January 2021.
- ▶ Extensions to funding available for those whose funding ends before 31st March 2021.
- ▶ 5/12ths fee waivers for 19/20 for self-funding students in their final 2 years.
- ▶ Online final and APR 2 Vivas
- ▶ Online supervision
- ▶ Regular communication from Graduate School, Doctoral Co-ordinators, Directors of Studies
- ▶ Online DRDP Sessions

The Role of the Supervisor within Doctoral Researcher Professional Development

- ▶ Current re-structuring of DRDP - from 'off the peg' to 'bespoke' programme
- ▶ New structure will be more accessible and more flexible
- ▶ Programme for each student each year to be discussed and agreed by the student and DoS at a 'training assessment' meeting. It may work to do this at a 'full team' meeting.
- ▶ Aim is to construct a programme that meets the training needs of the individual student
- ▶ These needs could be met both within the DRDP or beyond it (GER funding)
- ▶ Student's programme to be uploaded to the VRE as an attachment to the relevant supervision log
- ▶ The programme will be reviewed at the next APR

Resources:

Academic Regulations for Research Degrees and Research Degree Handbook:

<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/academic-programme>

Resources for Doctoral Supervisors (including Supervisor's Handbook, and resources from Vitae and UKCGE):

<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/graduate-school/resources-for-doctoral-supervisors>

Research Governance Framework:

<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/research/research-governance>