



**CARDIFF SCHOOL OF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY STUDIES**

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**PhD, PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE AND MPhil RESEARCH**

**STUDENT HANDBOOK 2011/12**

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## WELCOME

This handbook aims to give all full time and part time research students a brief guide to the School Research Degree requirements, procedures and other information you may find useful. If you are a returning student then most of this information will be familiar to you, although with the continuing changes in postgraduate education some of the information may be new to you. Please read it and keep it as a reference document. It contains a wealth of information and will save you the time and trouble of seeking information from other sources. It includes information on facilities and services; policies, procedures and regulations; submission and examination.

We recommend that you routinely use the electronic version of this handbook which is available on the following PGR webpage.

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/sonms/degreeprogrammes/postgraduate/postgraduateresearch/index.html>

Students involved in clinical research should also refer to the Research Governance Framework web pages at:

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/racdv/resgov/index.html>

Students should familiarise themselves with the School and University Research web pages

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/sonms/research/index.html>

We hope you find the handbook helpful, and if you need further information please feel free to contact me as Director of Postgraduate Studies (Research) or Rosemary Williams (PGR Administrator). We are here to help and support you.

We very much hope that you will enjoy your time at Cardiff University and that you find your PhD/Prof Doc/MPhil programme of study a stimulating and enjoyable experience.

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[Featherstonek@cf.ac.uk](mailto:Featherstonek@cf.ac.uk)

Rosemary Williams  
EO: Research Administration  
[Williamsrc@cf.ac.uk](mailto:Williamsrc@cf.ac.uk)

## **PGR OFFICE STAFF CONTACTS**

### **ACADEMIC STAFF**

Director of Research – Dr Annette Lankshear

Director of Postgraduate Studies (Research) – Dr Katie Featherstone

Director of Postgraduate Studies (Taught) – Dr Jane Harden

### **ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

EO: Research Administration – Mrs Rosemary Williams

Research Administration Support Assistant – Mrs Mina Kerai

### **USEFUL CONTACT DETAILS**

#### School

University website - [www.cardiff.ac.uk](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk)

School website - [www.cardiff.ac.uk/sonms](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/sonms)

Learning Central - (formerly Blackboard): Learning Central is a web-based learning environment which can be accessed both on and off-campus.

(<http://portal.cf.ac.uk>)

#### School Information Desks

Heath Park campus                      029 2068 7523 (Room 1.9, Ty Dewi Sant)

EastGate House campus                029 2091 7999 (Reception area)

#### School Academic and Support Staff:

[www.cardiff.ac.uk/sonms/contactsandpeople/index.html](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/sonms/contactsandpeople/index.html)

## RESEARCH IN THE CARDIFF SCHOOL OF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY STUDIES

The School of Nursing and Midwifery Studies (SONMS) undertakes theoretically informed and empirically rigorous research which stands at the forefront of nursing and midwifery policy debates at international, national and local levels.

Information on research within the school can be found on the School research web pages.

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/sonms/research/researchprogramme/researchthemes/index.html>

The School is one of the top nursing research departments in the UK. The research of the staff and postgraduate students leads to the publication of high quality papers and books and informs the development of health policy as well as clinical and educational practice. Postgraduate students benefit from bespoke research facilities located in the City Centre with easy access to the Graduate Centre and key research collaborators.

Much of our work is characterised by interdisciplinarity with many staff working at the interface of nursing and cognate disciplines and contributing to the advancement of knowledge and understanding which transcends disciplinary boundaries. Our research is designed to produce findings which will help to answer questions of policy relevance to health and social care. Research activity includes original studies, methodological innovation, the development and evaluation of empirically-based instruments and the review, synthesis and translation of evidence. Research undertaken within the School is increasingly influencing the evolution of the health and social care system and is shaping system change through the application of our findings and the utilisation of instruments arising from our empirical and theoretical work. We enjoy strong links with clinical practice and work closely with our partner NHS Health Boards.

Students are encouraged to participate in all School research events. Students are encouraged to attend:

- SONMS seminars
- Whole School Away Days

Communication of activities takes place through regular email updates from the Research Office.

## 1. ENROLMENT AND INDUCTION

### Enrolment

Students at Cardiff University must enrol (register and pay fees) online. You will be contacted by e-mail (or letter where necessary), approximately three weeks prior to the start of your programme, advising you that the online task is available for you to complete. The task can be accessed via SIMS online at: <http://sims.cf.ac.uk>.

### Starting Out: Induction

This event is an enjoyable opportunity to meet other research students and begin to develop those important personal and professional networks. It provides an introduction to research at Cardiff University, including rights and responsibilities, the facilities and services offered by the University Graduate College and presentations by existing students on starting and enjoying your research programme.

The induction programme has been carefully coordinated with Academic Schools to avoid repetition and to ensure that you gain 'the essentials' to start you on your way. Importantly, the event will introduce the training and development opportunities available at Cardiff University and enable you to begin planning your skills development

**Advance booking is required: go to the [RSSDP](#) bookings webpage and select the workshop category 'Induction'.**

Running from 9.00 am to 3.00 pm, it includes lunch and is offered on the following dates in the 2011/12 academic year:

Thursday, 6 October 2011

Wednesday, 12 October 2011

Tuesday, 25 October 2011

Tuesday, 24 January 2012

Monday, 23 April 2012

Thursday, 12 July 2012

Start and finish times for the event on each of these days is as follows: 9.00 am until 3.00pm, with coffee and cakes to follow.

### TRAINING

Each student must develop with their supervisors a planned and agreed programme of attendance on courses run by the University Graduate College:

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/ugc/training/rssdp/research-students-skills-development-programme.html>

All students are required to attend in Year 1 (in Years 1- 2 for part-time students):

- 'Starting out': an induction event for new PGR students (described above)

- The SONMS update for staff and students on procedures for the ethics review of research studies.
- The following workshops:
  - 'Academic Integrity and Ethics in Scientific Writing'
  - 'Avoiding Plagiarism'
  - 'Research Ethics 1: Research Governance (online course)'
  - 'Research Ethics 2: Working with Human Subjects (online course)'.

Students can book onto courses via the single web portal: <https://rssdp.cardiff.ac.uk/>

Courses, workshops and conference attendance is recorded and assessed via the 6 and 12 monthly review forms. This will inform the assessment of individual student progress and the identification of future training needs.

### *Teaching*

If students are interested in contributing to teaching or have been asked to undertake teaching duties within the School, they must:

- Discuss the implication for their timetable with supervisors
- Attend the workshop on 'Teaching Skills for Postgraduate Students (Social Sciences)'

### **STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

There is a PGR suite in EastGate House. Each student has access to a desk, storage space, and a networked computer. All students are encouraged to maintain regular office hours.

### **MAPS AND LOCATIONS**

During the course of your studies you will need to access other buildings in and around the Cathays Park and Heath campus, maps and locations can be viewed via the link below.

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/locations/index.html>

### **TELEPHONE AND FAX**

The costs of calls/faxes that need to be made in connection with the student's Research Programme are met by the School. Personal calls are not covered by this arrangement. The use of international facilities can be authorised by the student's supervisor or by the Director for Postgraduate Studies (Research)

## 2. STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

### 2.1 IT support/Library/Media and Graphics

Your Cardiff University username and password issued to you when you registered gives you access to the use of email, internet and all the normal software packages including word processing, spreadsheets, specialist statistical packages, on-line journals and Blackboard. The Cardiff Portal provides you with a personalised, single access point to content and services such as email, instant messaging (IM), search, news feeds, relevant applications, links to external content via a web browser (e.g. Microsoft Internet Explorer). Portal technology allows access to this information and services from anywhere in the world, at anytime of the day or night. Information Services Division (INSRV) provides a range of IT and library services for on site and external students, specialist information for researchers, poster design and laptop rental. For further information on the range of services offered by INSRV including a library location list please see:

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/insrv>

For any assistance with computer hardware or software issues contact the Information Services Helpdesk on telephone 02920 874487 or email [insrvconnect@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:insrvconnect@cardiff.ac.uk)

### 2.2 Wireless Networking

All sites have **wireless internet access**. You will need to register your wireless devices if they have wireless hardware on them (laptop/phone/pda) with INSRV

[www.cardiff.ac.uk/insrv/it/network/wireless/index.html](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/insrv/it/network/wireless/index.html)

### 2.3 Nursing and Healthcare Studies Library

The Nursing and Healthcare Studies Library (NHCS Library) provides information services to support both undergraduate and postgraduate students and academic staff in the schools of nursing and healthcare and staff of Cardiff and Vale University Health Board. The Library holds 25,000 books covering nursing, midwifery and healthcare plus subscriptions to current journals with many available electronically. The NHCS Library also provides access to a large number of quiet study spaces and public study rooms, including networked PC's, networked laser printers, scanners and photocopiers.

The library is currently situated within the Sir Herbert Duthie Library (Heath Park) but will be moving to the Cochrane Building in academic year 2011/12.

Term time opening hours:

Monday - Friday: 8:30am - 9.00pm

Saturday: 9am – 5pm

Sunday: Closed

Vacation opening hours:

Monday - Friday: 8.30am - 7pm

Saturday: 9am - 12.30pm

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#### **2.4 Media Resources Centre**

Responsible for the design, production and provision of media resources. Contact them for poster design and printing.

#### **2.5 Thesis Binding**

Thesis binding services can be found at Abbey Book Binders, Unit 3, Gabalfa Workshops (near Tesco, Western Avenue), Clos Menter, Cardiff. Telephone 02920 625420  
<http://abbeybookbinding.co.uk/>

#### **2.6 The Information literary resource bank - <https://ILRB.cf.ac.uk>**

The ILRB holds a selection of activities, quizzes, diagrams and cartoons as well as short ready-made self-paced tutorials on a range of essential information literacy topics such as citing references and avoiding plagiarism. The site is constantly being updated.

### 3. OTHER STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

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#### International Students

Jenny Clements, Elin Osmond and Julie Davies are the International Student Advisers who provide confidential advice and support to International students on a wide range of personal, financial and academic issues, as well as specialised immigration advice and help with applying for visas.

You can arrange an appointment to see an adviser by calling in to or contacting the Student Support Centre.

#### Contact details

Email: [iss@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:iss@cardiff.ac.uk)

Phone: +44 (0)29 208 74844

Fax: +44 (0)29 208 74947

#### Address:

International Student Support  
The Student Support Centre  
50 Park Place  
Cardiff  
CF10 3AT

Opening hours are normally 9.30am- 4.30pm Monday to Friday

#### The University Health Centre

The Health Centre is located at 47 Park Place, Cardiff CF10 3AT, Telephone - 02920 874810. The Health Centre is open from 9.00am to 4.30pm Monday to Friday. A slightly restricted service is available during the recesses. You may also call in without an appointment.

#### Day Care Facilities

The day care facilities are available for students at 45-50 Park Place. A reduction of fees may be made for students who cannot afford the standard fee.

#### Disability and Dyslexia Service

The service provides confidential advice and support for students who are disabled or who have a specific learning difficulty (dyslexia), mental health difficulty or long term medical condition. Staff can be contacted by Email on [dyslexia@cf.ac.uk](mailto:dyslexia@cf.ac.uk) or [disability@cf.ac.uk](mailto:disability@cf.ac.uk) and for mental health advice you can email [mhconfidential@cf.ac.uk](mailto:mhconfidential@cf.ac.uk). Tel 02920 743811, see <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/dysl/index.html>.

The two purpose designed student support centres are located at 50 Park Place, Tel. 02920 874844 and the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Cardigan House on the Heath Park campus, Tel. 02920 742070. The Heath Park Centre is open 09.00 to 4.30 from Monday to Thursday and the Park Place Centre is open from 11am to 4pm Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday and 11am to 1pm on Thursday. A drop in service is available where students can go to either campus and see the next available adviser. Services are confidential, impartial and

non-judgemental. To find out more go to <http://cardiff.ac.uk/studentsupport/index.html>  
or email [studentsupportcentre@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:studentsupportcentre@cardiff.ac.uk)

#### 4. THE GRADUATE CENTRE



Cardiff University is among the few universities in Britain to offer a dedicated facility for its postgraduate students. The Graduate Centre was opened in September 1999 to provide year-round, centrally-located social and study facilities to both taught and research postgraduate students at Cardiff University, in addition to the facilities provided by individual academic schools. Today, the Centre serves as a hub for postgraduates of all disciplines throughout the university, allowing students the opportunity to meet and socialise within the broader postgraduate community, and adding another dimension to life as a postgraduate at Cardiff.

The Graduate Centre is located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Students Union Building, Park Place and is open from Monday to Saturday 8.00am to 12.00 midnight and Sunday 12.00 noon to 12.00 midnight. It is open throughout the year, including the summer and at most bank holidays although food and bar services operate at reduced hours during July and August.

The Graduate Centre's web site is updated daily and there are events pages and links to other helpful sites. There is a fortnightly email bulletin to all postgraduates and you will be added to this list automatically after enrolment. If you are not receiving this, e-mail the Centre or the PGR office.

Email: [Grad-Centre@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:Grad-Centre@cardiff.ac.uk).

Telephone: 029 2087 4748

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/gradc/aboutus/index.html>

Facilities include a Café Bar, which offers food service during the day and bar/snack service afternoon into night. There is a computer room with 43 networked computers, as well as printing and scanning services. The two meeting rooms can be booked without charge for student-led research seminars, presentation practice, or group projects, while the Reading Room provides an additional study space. There is also a lounge with eight computers, sofas, work tables, daily newspapers, and information about Cardiff University, the city, and the regions. There are vending machines for out of hours snacks. Details of all of these can be found on the web.

##### *Social Activities*

The academic year begins with Postgraduate Welcome Events, organised in cooperation with the PostGrad Society and the Students Union. Details can be found at [www.cardiff.ac.uk/gradc/welcome](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/gradc/welcome). During the year, there are a variety of social events including quiz nights, live music, "open mic", and film nights. The Centre also organises day trips to attractions in England and Wales. Check the web site for the latest.

## 5. UNIVERSITY GRADUATE COLLEGE

The new University Graduate College brings together the work of four previous, discipline-based Graduate Schools and the postgraduate research activity of the Graduate Centre. It aims to support the work of academic Schools and supervisors and to enhance the experience of postgraduate research students at Cardiff University.



The University Graduate College has four interlinked programme areas:

It delivers an integrated and consolidated programme of academic-led [training and development for postgraduate researchers](#) through the well-established Research Students' Skills Development Programme (RSSDP) and associated activities such as conferences, lectures and seminars that enable researchers to come together across the University.

It [assures a quality experience](#) for postgraduate researchers by developing and monitoring processes for their feedback and representation; communicating and monitoring implementation of the Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes; enhancing systems to assist in management of research degrees; and enhancing support for supervisors.

It co-ordinates work to [build capacities](#) and to align postgraduate research training with the University's research strengths and priorities. This includes involvement in recruitment of postgraduate researchers; development of additional scholarships; enhancing provision via partnerships with other universities, consortia, learned societies and industry; and

It leads on providing [world class facilities](#) for postgraduate researchers, both physical and virtual, and aims to ensure that University facilities are responsive to researcher needs.

Its structures, based on the need for connectivity with the academic knowledge base, include representation of Directors of Postgraduate Research and researchers themselves and seek to involve the active input of research supervisors.

In the first phase of implementation, the University Graduate College is focusing primarily on postgraduate research students. However, as part of a longer-term aim of holistic management of skills development and support as a continuum across the researcher lifecycle, the University Graduate College offers joint activity for postgraduate researchers and research staff where appropriate.

All of Cardiff's postgraduate research students and their supervisors are members of the University Graduate College and are strongly encouraged to contribute to its development.

The governance and organisational structures are designed to increase participation and linkages with academic Schools.

The University Graduate College Office is located on the ground floor of 60 Park Place. Email [ugc@cf.ac.uk](mailto:ugc@cf.ac.uk) or telephone 02920-(8)79408. Web: <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/ugc/index.html>

## 6. SUPERVISION GUIDELINES

The quality of supervision is perhaps the most important element of the postgraduate research experience and we endeavour to ensure that it is of an excellent standard, incorporates best practice from around the University and meets University quality requirements. Every student is assigned a supervisory team of two or more supervisors, a lead or main supervisor, a co-supervisor and perhaps a secondary supervisor. This enables students to get a wide breadth of skills and knowledge, while ensuring regular contact with a staff member with particular expertise in the Research Degree subject area. The supervisors will assist students throughout their studies. The quality of supervision is monitored by the Research Degrees Committee. All supervisors who have not attended supervisor training in the last 3 years must attend a refresher course, which are regularly run by the University.

Supervisor eligibility is defined as a member of the academic staff (professor, reader, senior lecturer or lecturer) or of the senior research staff who is employed by the University on at least a 50% contract or a part-time member of staff who has formerly satisfied the criteria. For external students, the requirement is that at least one of the supervisory team should be an academic staff member who has formerly satisfied the above criteria.

Supervisors are responsible to the Head of School for the management of research degree students assigned to them. They are expected to provide advice at every stage of the planning and conduct of the research and the writing of the thesis. It is expected that all supervisors will provide appropriate support and guidance to their student(s), and through expert advice and direction, will encourage their students(s) to achieve their research potential and assist them to submit a completed thesis for examination by the end of their period of fee-paying registration. The Main Supervisor is primarily responsible for giving help and advice in choosing a topic of appropriate scope and significance, obtaining good research training, and organising the research. Responsibilities of the Supervisor include: being aware of the University's Regulations and Codes of Practice governing research degrees, and drawing the student's attention to them as appropriate; updating knowledge and skills with regard to research student supervision.

Student and supervisors are encouraged to have regular meetings. All students and supervisors are expected to keep records of each supervision meeting and what action has been agreed.

Students are encouraged to:

- Organise regular meetings with their supervisors - monthly meetings are usual for FT students
- Summarise the supervision meeting to establish a record of their perception and understanding of the outcome of supervision.

The supervisory experience and record of success for each student will be monitored via the 6 and 12 monthly reviews.

## 7. MONITORING PROGRESS

The progress of all students registered for higher degrees by research are monitored from the date of initial registration on the programme through to thesis submission (including during any period beyond that of fee-paying registration and any resubmission period).

All students are provided with the provisional dates of their reviews in advance and copies of the appropriate forms from the PGR office. Feedback and evaluation reports are sent to students from the Director of PGR (in the case of 6 monthly reviews) or the review panel (in the case of 12 monthly reviews).

### *Six-monthly progress reports*

The principle underlying the six-monthly reporting exercise is that it allows a student's progress to be assessed with sufficient frequency to allow for prompt remedial action to be taken as necessary. This should also include the reviewing and updating the Research Plan.

- Research students are required to submit Self-Assessment Reports at six-monthly intervals up until thesis submission.
- Supervisors are required to produce a Student Progress Report for each student working under their direction, at six-monthly intervals, up until thesis submission.

Where a student fails to submit a Self-Assessment Report without proper explanation the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies may request the student concerned to attend an interview to discuss the reason(s) for the non-submission of the Report.

Where a student's Self-Assessment Report and/or the supervisor's Progress Report give rise to concern about the student's progress, the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies will:

- Request the student concerned attends an interview with him/her
- The supervisor(s) can be invited to attend the interview with the student. (The student can, however, request a separate meeting with the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies to which the supervisor(s) shall not be invited to attend)
- A written record of any formal progress interview conducted by the Director of Research Studies or the School Committee will be placed on the student's school file and a copy given to the student.
- A student who fails to submit two consecutive Self-Assessment Reports can be deemed by the School to have terminated his/her candidature for a research degree.
- The student shall be notified in writing, by the Head of School that they are deemed to have withdrawn. A copy of the communication shall be sent to the Director of Registry and Student Support.

### *Annual progress review and progression*

The progress of every research student is formally reviewed on an annual basis up until the completion of the research study. Every 12 months, students are required to submit a progress report and a substantial piece of written work (normally a thesis chapter) and attend a formal interview with a panel consisting of two senior members of staff (usually the Director of PGR and at least one other senior member of staff).

The first year of a full-time programme (or the first two years of a part-time programme) is considered to be probationary. Students will be registered as 'MPhil/PhD' during this period

and must demonstrate satisfactory progress before being permitted to move on to the next stage of the programme.

In addition, all students' progress is formally reviewed at the end of every year of study, and a student may be required to withdraw from the University or to change from PhD to MPhil status if his/her progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory.

The formal review of progress and determining the progression decision is:

- Based on the submission, by the student, of a substantial piece of written work (equivalent to a thesis chapter).
- The student's written report must be made available to those members of staff responsible for reviewing the student's progress in advance of the meeting, allowing for adequate consideration.
- The student is required to attend a meeting arranged to consider his/her progress. The reviewers will discuss specific items arising from the written submission.
- The review panel will include the Director of PGR and another senior member of academic staff
- As part of the formal review, the reviewers receive a recommendation from the student's supervisor(s) regarding the continuation of the candidature.

The reviewers determine one of the following:

- that the student has made satisfactory progress (during the probation period or any other year of the programme) and shall be permitted to continue as a candidate for the qualification for which he/she is registered; **or**
- that the student be permitted to change his/her registration from MPhil to PhD (taking into consideration the viability of the project as well as the progress of the student); **or**
- that the student's progress is less than satisfactory and he/she is required to change his/her registration from PhD to MPhil (having satisfied themselves that the revised research project is, or will be, appropriate for an MPhil submission within a revised time-scale, and that the student has made or is making adequate progress toward the revised qualification aim); **or**
- that the student's progress is less than satisfactory and he/she be warned of exclusion from research study.

The student shall be informed of the reviewers' decision immediately. The reviewers will then provide a report, summarising the assessment. Any unsatisfactory aspects of performance should be clearly defined with an attempt to identify the underlying cause, and with recommendations as to subsequent progress and actions. The student will be given a copy of the report and will be given the opportunity to discuss any aspects with the Chair of the meeting, and should be allowed to add comments to the report.

The progression decision for each student will also be reported to the Registry.

A student can appeal against exclusion (see section below).

#### *Exclusion from study*

Failure on the part of any research student to comply with the University's monitoring requirements, or failure to maintain progress to the satisfaction of the review panel, may lead to his/her exclusion from research study.

Where a student's progress is a matter for concern, the Supervisor shall inform the student directly. Depending on the degree of concern, the Supervisor may **either**:

- warn the student, orally, **or**
- ask the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies to interview the student and to issue him/her with a formal written warning, signed by the Head of School, stating that his/her failure to comply with the University's Monitoring requirements/lack of academic progress, may lead to his/her exclusion from research study. A copy of the written warning must be placed on the student's School file and a copy sent to the Director of Registry and Student Support, for the attention of the Graduate Development Committee.
- A research student who has received written warning from the Head of School shall be given **at least three months** in which to demonstrate compliance/improvement.

At the end of the three months' warning period, the Supervisor shall recommend to the Head of School, via the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies, **either**:

- that the warning be lifted, **or**
- that the warning be extended for a further period of three months, **or**
- that the student be excluded from research study.

No research student shall remain under warning for more than six consecutive months. At the end of six months, a decision about his/her future status must be made by the Head of School. Recommendations for the termination of research students' registration shall be referred to the School Committee for Postgraduate Research, which will meet to consider recommendations from Supervisors for the termination of a student's registration.

The Head of School shall notify the student, in writing, that a formal recommendation for his/her exclusion from research study has been made. The Head of School shall invite the student to:

- submit any written information that he/she wishes to be put before the relevant School Committee
- attend the meeting of the School Committee/Panel, in person, to present his/her case against exclusion.
- The student shall be given 10 clear days' notice, in writing, of the meeting that will consider the recommendation for his/her exclusion. The notice shall be sent Recorded Delivery.
- Where a student fails to respond to the Head of School's invitation, or elects not to attend the exclusion meeting, the School Committee/Panel may proceed to consider the recommendation for exclusion in his/her absence.
- The student shall be informed, in writing, by the Head of School, of the decision reached by the School Committee/Panel in his/her case.

#### *Appeals against exclusion/termination of candidature*

A research student who has been excluded or whose candidature has been terminated, may appeal against the exclusion/termination to the Graduate Development Committee.

A research student who appeals to the Graduate Development Committee against the decision to exclude him/her from research study, or to terminate his/her candidature, shall be entitled to appear before a Sub-Committee appointed by the Committee, in person and to be accompanied by a person of his/her choosing.

The decision of the Graduate Development Committee in these cases, shall be final.

## 8. RESEARCH REVIEW AND SCREENING COMMITTEE (RReSC)

All research proposed by staff and students in the School of Nursing and Midwifery Studies and all education and/or practice development projects with a research component, should be submitted to the [Research Review and Screening Committee \(RReSC\)](#). In all cases proposals should be sent for RReSC review *before* they are sent for review to any external body (including grant awarding bodies, or NHS research ethics committees). **Staff and students are also advised that RReSC is *not* a research ethics committee, but will guide researchers towards an NHS or a non-NHS route for final ethics approval.**

The principal aim of RReSC is to promote quality, staff and students should note that submitting their work for review and/or ethics screening by RReSC is not an optional extra, but is an essential part of the process of securing approval for their plans.

RReSC reviewers and applicants submitting their plans to RReSC are reminded that this committee fulfils six distinct responsibilities with respect to the research proposals it receives. The context in which research projects are proposed determines which combination of these responsibilities are discharged in each case.

Further information can be found in the document *RReSC – Outline of Functions and Overview of Procedures*, which can be downloaded from the RReSC website:

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/sonms/research/peerreview/>

## 9. RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (REC)

The School also operates a [research ethics committee \(REC\)](#), chaired by an [ethics officer](#), which considers proposals not being reviewed through the NHS REC system. This committee has produced [guidance on research ethics](#) for the benefit of staff and students. The School REC publishes [dates](#) for submission of applications and researchers are advised to include with their proposals a completed [REC approval form](#).

Information can be found on the REC website:

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/sonms/research/peerreview/index.html>

## 10. STUDY PERIODS

PhD Programme	Study Period	Time limit
Full-time	3 years	4 years
Part-time	5 years	7 years
Staff member	3 years or longer	7 years
Professional Doctorate		
Part-time	5 years	7 years
MPhil Programme		
Full-time	1 year	3 years
Part-time	2 years	5 years

### *Minimum periods of study*

A candidate must register at the University, pay the appropriate fee prescribed and pursue the research programme for the minimum registered period of study defined:

- by pursuing a PhD candidature full-time in the University, or full-time in an external place of employment, or as a member of staff:
  - three years, the first year of which shall be regarded as probationary;
- by pursuing a PhD part-time external candidature:
  - five years, the first two years of which shall be regarded as probationary.

### *Submission deadlines*

A candidature for PhD shall lapse if a thesis is not submitted, in the form and manner prescribed by the University, by the following time limit for completion:

- by pursuing a three-year, or longer, full-time registered period of study in the University, or in an external place of employment:
  - four years from the beginning of the candidate's period of study;
- by pursuing a two-year full-time registered period of study in the University, or in an external place of employment, being exempt the probationary year:
  - three years from the beginning of the candidate's period of study;
- by pursuing a five-year, or longer, part-time external registered period of study:
  - seven years from the beginning of the candidate's period of study;
- by pursuing a three-year part-time external registered period of study, being exempt the probationary period:
  - five years from the beginning of the candidate's period of study;
- by pursuing a three-year, or longer, registered period of study as a member of staff:
  - seven years from the beginning of the candidate's period of study;
- by pursuing a two-year registered period of study as a member of staff, being exempt the probationary year:
  - five years from the beginning of the candidate's period of study.

### *Interruptions to time limits*

A registered period of study may be interrupted or a time limit extended by the University in accordance with the Student Absence Procedure – Interruption of Study and/or Extension to Time Limit Procedure.

### *Extension to Time Limit*

An extension to a time limit is defined as a period of University approved extension to the anticipated submission deadline of thesis.

This Procedure applies to all registered postgraduate research candidates:  
An extension to a time limit should not normally exceed 12 calendar months.  
The responsibility for approving an extension to a time limit shall lie with the Cardiff University Graduate Development Committee, on the recommendation of the relevant Head of School.

A time limit for submission may be extended by the University, in exceptional cases, and only in accordance with the following criteria, which can be demonstrated to have adversely affected the candidate's progress:

- ill health
- compassionate grounds
- parental leave
- exceptional professional commitments
- unavoidable practical or logistical difficulties

An application for an extension to a time limit should normally be made by the candidate in writing to the Head of School stating:

- The original submission date
- The requested submission date
- The reason for the extension request
- Applications must be supported by documentary evidence, including medical certification where appropriate.
- A timetable clearly defining the work to be done and timescale for completion
- The Head of School should consider the application in the context of a statement on the case from the student's Supervisor

The full and reasoned written case, supported by appropriate independent evidence, must be endorsed by the Head of School and submitted to Registry for the consideration of Graduate Development Committee. In all cases, a clear statement from the School concerned must be supplied, showing that the case has been evaluated and that the requested extension is considered to be appropriate.

Backdated applications will only be considered under exceptional circumstances, where the School can show good reason why the request was not made at the appropriate time.

The Head of School should notify the candidate and supervisor, in writing, if any application is not endorsed and therefore not forwarded for consideration by the Graduate Development Committee.

#### *Confirmation of decision*

Consideration of applications for an extension to a time limit shall take place as soon as possible after a request is submitted.

The candidate and School will be notified in writing of the decision of Graduate Development Committee by Registry. The candidate will be informed of any right to appeal against a decision not to grant an extension to a time limit, or against the length of the extension to a time limit that has been granted.

#### *Appeals*

The candidate shall be given ten days from the date of notification within which to lodge an appeal against a decision not to grant an extension to a time limit. Notification will be made by Registry in cases where the application has been taken forward to Graduate Development

Committee or by the Head of School where an application was not endorsed at School level. The appeal shall be made to the Director of Registry and Student Support in writing and shall contain details of all circumstances relevant to the appeal which the candidate wishes to be taken into account.

- Appeals shall be considered by a Pro Vice-Chancellor who has had no association with the first consideration of the application for an extension to a time limit.
- As part of the appeals process, the Pro Vice-Chancellor shall consider a report of the deliberations of the Head of School/Graduate Development Committee as relevant, any submission by the candidate and such other evidence as is deemed appropriate.
- The Pro Vice-Chancellor shall determine whether the appeal shall be upheld and, if so, the length of extension to a time limit, if any, that shall be granted.
- The decision of the Pro Vice-Chancellor shall be final and no further submissions shall be considered.

## 11. PROFESSIONAL DOCTORATE PROGRAMME

The Professional Doctoral Programme is designed for senior professionals who will draw upon their responsibilities and experience in practice throughout the programme. The programme enables students to develop work-based research projects for the completion of assignments and thesis. It aims to equip them to use research methods to interpret theory and research, critique current methods and interventions, and translate these findings into a form that can direct their present and future practice.

Whereas the traditional PhD provides training for professional researchers, the professional doctorate provides education and training in research for professionals. In other words, it is designed to offer a programme of research-based professional development for experienced practitioners. Unlike the PhD, which is intended to produce professional researchers, the professional doctorate is intended to produce researching professionals; i.e. professional practitioners in the field of health care who are able to use research to tackle emergent problems of practice and contribute to the advancement of professional practice.

The programme is broadly divided into two stages, a modular (taught stage) consisting of eight assessed modules of learning at 'D' (doctoral) level and a research stage.

### **Stage One: Modular component**

The modular stage is divided into two elements; a compulsory module set; and a specialist/option module set. The modular (taught) stage consists of the following:

Element	Modules
<b>Core Modules</b> Compulsory unless accreditation given	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Research Design</li><li>2. The Collection &amp; Analysis of Quantitative Data</li><li>3. The Collection &amp; Analysis of Qualitative Data</li><li>4. Changing Modes of Professionalism</li></ol>
<b>Generic Option Modules</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Research &amp; Evidence -Based Policy &amp; Practice</li><li>2. Action Research</li><li>3. Contemporary Social Theory &amp; Professional Work</li><li>4. Social Policy</li><li>5. Promoting Equality, Managing Diversity</li><li>6. Public Sector Management</li><li>7. Community, Sustainable Health &amp; Wellbeing</li><li>8. Healthcare Governance &amp; Management</li></ol>
<b>Specialist Modules</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Analysing Practice Through Work Based Learning</li><li>2. Advancing Professional Nursing Practice</li><li>3. Systematic Reviewing of Evidence: Politics, Process and Practice.</li></ol>

## **Stage Two: Research Component**

The Roberts' Review (2002) recommended that every doctoral candidate should receive two weeks of generic skills training each year. The Professional Doctorate Programme will ensure that every student has access to high quality research skills training

This is achieved through a range of activities. The compulsory research modules are approved by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and are delivered by experienced, practising researchers. As a doctoral candidate the student will also be a member of the University Graduate College and the University Graduate Centre both of which offer additional training and other opportunities for graduate students.

In addition, they will be offered the same opportunities as all traditional PhD students; they may attend school and research group seminars and be encouraged to make a presentation at the Annual PGR Symposium. This conference is seen as a valuable aid in developing presentational skills as well as instilling confidence in communicating ideas to an audience.

Another recommendation of the Roberts Report was that every student should take part in a process of Personal Development Planning (PDP). PDP is a structured and supported process that will help them to review their learning experiences, set personal and academic goals and evaluate their progress towards attaining these goals.

## 12. DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

### Criteria for the award of PhD

The degree of PhD may be awarded by the University in recognition of the successful completion of a programme of further study and research, the results of which are judged to constitute an original contribution to learning and to give evidence of:

- the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline and merit publication;
- 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;
- an ability to relate the results of such study to the general body of knowledge in the discipline;
- the general ability to conceptualise, design and implement a project for the generation of new knowledge, applications or understanding at the forefront of the discipline, and to adjust the project design in the light of unforeseen problems;
- a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.
- In judging the merit of a thesis submitted in candidature for the degree of PhD, the examiners shall bear in mind the standard and scope of work which it is reasonable to expect a capable and diligent student to present after the period of registered full-time or part-time study.
- The degree of PhD may not be conferred *honoris causa* under these regulations.

#### *Method of candidature*

A candidate may qualify for the degree of PhD by pursuing one of the following methods of study:

- by pursuing full-time research at the University
- by pursuing part-time research externally
- by pursuing research as a member of staff
- A candidate may qualify for the degree of PhD by pursuing full-time research in an external place of employment approved by the University
- It is possible, in appropriate cases, to transfer from one method of candidature to another (e.g. from full-time to part-time and vice versa). In such cases the University will determine a revised minimum registered period of study and will fix the earliest and latest dates for the submission of the thesis. The revised registered period of study is calculated by establishing the proportion of full-time or part-time study a candidate has already completed, then converting the remaining proportion of study into its part-time or full-time equivalent. The revised time-limit is calculated on the same basis.
- Where a School proposes to admit a PhD candidate who will pursue full-time research in an external place of employment, the following written assurances shall be provided by the employer:
  - that the candidate will be working on full-time research on a particular, agreed project;
  - that the research work shall be undertaken under the direct supervision and control of a main supervisor nominated by the Head of School with specific duties related to the candidature; such control shall include the right of the supervisor to have access to the candidate and his/her work at all times in the place of his/her employment.

## Academic integrity

Integrity and honesty are fundamental values in any academic institution. Integrity and honesty in research are essential to the function of the academic community, as well as to the University's reputation.

"All Researchers should maintain exemplary standards of academic practice and honesty in all aspects of research by reading, understanding and incorporating these guidelines into their everyday work. Any breach of these guidelines may be grounds for disciplinary action." (Cardiff University's Research Governance Framework)

All individuals pursuing research degrees at this University are expected to observe the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty and the University will deal severely with those individuals found to be in breach of these standards.

The University expects that, by virtue of advanced academic standing and of substantial previous experience in the academic environment, persons admitted to postgraduate study, enter the University with an awareness of the general standards for appropriate academic behaviour, and of what constitutes academic integrity and honesty.

The supervisor(s) will provide support and guidance as to what constitutes good research practice in the discipline concerned, but the onus is on the individual to conduct themselves and their work honestly and ethically.

### *Research Misconduct*

Research Misconduct specifically encompasses, but is not limited to, the following:

- *Piracy* the deliberate exploitation of the ideas from others without proper acknowledgement
- *Plagiarism* the copying of ideas, text, software or data (or various combinations thereof) without permission or acknowledgement
- *misrepresentation* any deliberate attempt to represent falsely or unfairly facts or the ideas or work of others, whether or not for personal gain or enhancement
- *fraud* deliberate deception, which may include the invention, or fabrication, of data
- *protocols* failure to follow established protocols if this failure results in unreasonable risk or harm to humans, other sentient creatures generally recognised in this context, or the environment, and facilitating of misconduct in research by collusion in, or concealment of, such actions by others
- *removal or damage* intentional, unauthorised removal of or damage to research-related property of another including apparatus, materials, writings, data, hardware or software or any other substances or devices used in or produced by the conduct of research.

In the event that a candidate for the award of a research degree of the University is suspected of any research misconduct, the matter will be investigated and disciplinary action may be taken under one of the following procedures, as appropriate:

- *misconduct identified before formal thesis submission:*
  - Staff Disciplinary Procedure *or*
  - Procedure for Dealing with Allegations of Misconduct by Employees in Academic Research *or*
  - Student Disciplinary Procedure (according to the status of the candidate's registration);

- *misconduct identified after formal thesis submission:*
  - Unfair Practice (Research Degrees) Procedure
  - Where a case of unfair practice relates to a thesis submitted in candidature for a research degree of Cardiff University, the normal consequence is failure — with or without the opportunity to re-submit.

*CU research governance framework*

This document, approved by Cardiff University's ("the University") Governing Council as a Research Governance Framework, applies to all members of staff and students involved in research at the University, including its staff and students conducting research outside the University as well as any persons not employed by the University but with permission to carry out research at the University (all referred to hereafter as Researchers). All Researchers should maintain exemplary standards of academic practice and honesty in all aspects of research by reading, understanding and incorporating these guidelines into their everyday work. Any breach of these guidelines may be grounds for disciplinary action.

All Researchers have a responsibility and a duty of accountability to society, to their profession, to the University and to the funders of the research, to accept full responsibility for the professionalism and integrity of all aspects of the conduct and publication of their research, and for the activities of any staff or students under their direction. This extends to reporting conflicts of interest, actual or potential, or suspected misconduct, in the appropriate manner. Researchers must also accept accountability for taking steps to ensure the safety of those associated with the research, the probity of the financial management of the research project, and for seeking to provide optimum value for the public or private funds invested in the project. All legal and ethical requirements laid down by the University or any other properly authorised bodies must be observed.

For further details see web link:

<http://www.caerdydd.ac.uk/racdv/staff/resgov/governance/framework/>

### **13. THE RESEARCH DEGREE EXAMINATION**

References in these regulations to 'a thesis' should be taken to include any non-standard forms of submission/assessment approved by the Graduate Development Committee in respect of particular candidatures. Every doctoral candidate's research shall be completed by the presentation of a thesis which embodies the methods and results of the research. In respect of PhD, the thesis shall not normally exceed 80,000 words in length (excluding appendices and genuine footnotes).

For the purpose of examination (including re-examination), a candidate shall submit the items listed below to the Head of the School concerned, or his/her designated nominee:

Two typed and bound copies of the thesis, each of which shall contain:

- a summary not exceeding three hundred words;
- a statement signed by the candidate declaring that the work submitted is the result of the candidate's own investigation;
- a signed declaration to certify that the work submitted has not been accepted in substance for any other degree or award, and is not being submitted concurrently in candidature for any degree or other award;
- a signed statement regarding availability of the thesis
- an additional loose copy of the summary;
- a completed 'Notice of Submission' form.

A candidate may not amend, add to or delete from the thesis after it has been submitted, unless this is required as a result of a decision of an Examining Board.

#### **13.1 Format for presentation of the thesis**

PhD candidates submitting theses for examination shall submit the required number of copies either in a condition suitable for eventual deposit and use in libraries or, where this is in accordance with the policy of the School concerned, in temporary binding.

Candidates choosing to submit their work for examination in temporary binding must ensure that it is sufficiently secure to withstand transit to and from the examiners and shows on the spine, in a form which cannot easily be erased or detached, the candidate's name and the degree for which s/he is a candidate.

Irrespective of the type of binding used for submission for examination, theses for the degree of PhD shall, prior to the release of a successful candidate's result by the Convenor of the Examining Board, be bound in a format that is appropriate for library deposit.

- Theses shall be bound permanently within boards, the binding being of a fixed kind in which leaves are permanently secured in the manner of a hardback book. The boards shall have sufficient rigidity to support the weight of the work when standing upon a shelf.
- The spine shall bear the surname and initials of the candidate, the full or abbreviated title of the work, the name of the degree for which it was submitted and the date of submission. This information shall be printed along the spine in such a way as to be readable when the volume is lying flat with the front cover uppermost.
- If the work consists of more than one volume the spine shall also bear the number of each volume.

All copies of theses, whether for the purpose of examination or for deposit in libraries, shall be:

- Presented in permanent and legible form in typescript or print and the characters employed in the main text (but not necessarily in illustrations, maps etc) shall be not less than 12pt; characters employed in all other texts, notes, footnotes, etc, shall be not less than 10pt.
- Typing shall be of even quality with clear black characters, and capable of photographic reproduction.
- Double or one-and-a-half spacing shall be used in the main text, but single spacing shall be used in the summary and in any indented quotations and footnotes.
- Drawings and sketches shall be in black ink; unnecessary detail should be omitted and the scale should be such that the minimum space between lines is not less than 1mm.
- Colour graphics for charts, diagrams, etc., and colour photographs may be used, but candidates must in all cases ensure that material is capable of being photocopied and microfilmed.
- Copies produced by xerographic or comparable permanent processes are acceptable.
- A4 paper shall be used and should be of good quality and sufficient opacity for normal reading.
- Diagrams, maps and similar documents, of a size unsuited to be bound within the thesis, shall be submitted in a portfolio of reasonable size and shall bear the particulars stated to be necessary for the volume.
- Candidates may submit non-book material, such as audio or video recordings, with their thesis, if such material forms a useful addition to, or explanation of, work contained in the written submission and if such material constitutes the most appropriate method of presenting the information concerned.
- Any material of this type shall be enclosed in a container which is suitable for storage on a library shelf and which bears the same information as that required on the spine of the thesis/dissertation, so placed as to be readily legible when the container is in its stored position.
- Candidates considering the submission of audio or video material as adjuncts to their thesis should consult their supervisor and the University Librarian for advice at an early stage of their project.

#### *Availability of thesis*

A thesis submitted for the award of PhD shall normally be openly available and subject to no security or restriction of access. On submission, a candidate shall be required to sign a statement indicating – either

- that the thesis, if successful, may be made available for inter-library loan or photocopying (subject to the law of copyright), and that the title and summary may be made available to outside organisations; or
- that the thesis, if successful, may be made so available after expiry of a bar on access; in this case, the title and summary of the thesis shall normally be freely available.

#### *Bar on access*

A request may be submitted to the Graduate Development Committee to place a bar on photocopying and/or access to a candidate's work for a specified period normally of no longer duration than two years. In exceptional cases a bar on access may exceed two years, but shall not exceed five years.

- Any recommendation for a bar on access must be made to the Graduate Development Committee by a candidate's supervisor, supported by the Head of School. It shall be the responsibility of the supervisor to make the application as soon as is reasonably practicable, and normally at the time of initial registration.
- The recommendation must include a statement of the grounds on which the request is being made. [Most requests of this nature are made on the grounds of the commercial sensitivity of the research, which may have been partially sponsored by a commercial or industrial organisation.]
- Any approved bar on access will also apply to members of the University's staff.
- Where a bar on access has been approved, the summary and title of the thesis shall normally be freely available.
- When a bar on access has been granted, the Registry will notify the Head of School. Following a successful examination, the Registry will notify the Convenor of the Examining Board, the University Librarian and the National Librarian that the work is to be withheld from access for a specified period.
- Although the bar shall be regarded as operative as soon as the work is submitted, the period approved shall be calculated from the date on which the candidate is formally notified by the University that s/he has qualified for a degree.

*Publication of work prior to submission*

A candidate is at liberty to publish the whole or part of the work produced during his/her candidature prior to its submission as a whole, or part of a thesis, provided that in the published work it is nowhere stated that it is in consideration for a higher degree.

Such published work may later be incorporated in the thesis submitted.

## 13.2 PhD Thesis - A Fundamental Pre-Submission Check List for Students (and Supervisors)

Trevor Boyns

### *Common Criticisms of PhD theses made by examiners*

- Lack of a clear statement of the aim of the thesis, in particular the research question(s) and/or hypothesis(es) being addressed
- Lack of a clear statement of the methodology being adopted and the rationale for this
- Chapters are too long and un-focused
- Lack of focus in respect to
  - Contextualising material
  - Literature review
  - Methodology chapter
- Tables not adequately linked to the text
- Lack of links ('signposts') between chapters
- Poor final editing/referencing

*Check-list for PhD candidates and supervisors to help avoid the criticisms noted above (to be used prior to thesis submission)*

When a thesis is submitted, remember that anybody who is going to read it simply has the text of it to go on – they will not have been party to any discussions relating to the subject matter or the methodology, and will not have had the chance, at any time in the past, of discussing with the author any of the issues addressed. Thus, unless something is stated in the thesis, the reader will have no knowledge of it. Therefore, within the text of a thesis, all relevant issues **must** be explained - the person reading a thesis needs to know what has been done (and why!). If you have done something, but you have not indicated this in the thesis, then the reader is not going to know about it. The absence of such information may help to raise doubts in the mind of the reader about the methodology used, and/or leave things unclear. Any lack of clarity/transparency should be avoided. This is particularly a problem in theses which contain lots of data and/or econometric/statistical analysis – if there is no explanation of what has been done or, alternatively, if assumptions have been made but these have not been explained, or no explanation has been provided as to why assumptions have been made, then the reader could legitimately raise questions about the methodology employed.

*Checks to be carried out prior to submission:*

1. Try to step back from your thesis and think about it as a whole. Has the **aim of the thesis** been indicated clearly to the reader, along with how that aim is to be achieved? Has the fundamental **research question/questions** and/or **hypothesis/hypotheses** been clearly set out? Does the thesis actually do what it has been stated it is going to do? Does everything that has been done contribute to the argument put forward in the thesis? Does it help to achieve the aim? Is the sum of the parts greater than or less than the whole?
2. Was the thesis compiled chapter by chapter in a somewhat piecemeal manner? If yes, do the **chapters** link together and is it the case that each chapter makes a valid contribution to the overall thesis? Is it made clear to the reader how the chapter does this? Are the arguments within the thesis consistent, and is the thesis a cohesive entity? It is vital that, in each chapter, the message of the chapter is clearly specified, and how it contributes to the overall argument being presented in the thesis. Is the argument logical and clear? [Note, there should be no padding for the sake of it, and anything which does not contribute to the overall argument should be removed.]
3. Many a thesis will require material which provides some sort of **contextualisation** of the study. If the study is related to a specific country it might be important to provide some detailed background relating to that country. Such contextualising material, however, must be pertinent to the study; it should not be too general and/or disconnected from the subject matter of the thesis. Many contextualising chapters have been criticised for being too general, unfocused and providing little beneficial knowledge for the reader, while at the same time important contextualising information which could have helped the reader has not been provided. Remember that the reader is unlikely to have your detailed knowledge of the specific country or subject area on which you are focusing – so try to think about what they might be aware of, and hence what they do not know, but would need to in order to fully understand what you have done (and provide it!). However, do not simply put in details or data for the sake of it. Many candidates include tables of figures relating to a country which relate to issues that have very little, if anything, to do with the subject matter of the thesis. Why? What benefit does their inclusion have for the reader? If such material does not add anything, then omit it!
4. If the thesis was written chapter by chapter, was the **literature review** chapter completed towards the beginning of the candidature? If so, has it been kept up to date? Does it reflect the state of knowledge two or three years ago when it was first written, or does it include the most recent relevant work in the subject area of the thesis? A literature review must be up-to-date!
5. In addition to being up-to-date, a **literature review** must be relevant. It is quite likely that the literature review was initially carried out at an early stage in the research process, prior to the precise research questions being finalised and the **methodology** firmly pinned down. As a result there is much potential for there to be something of a mis-match between the literature review and the ultimate research questions examined and methodology employed. It is vital that candidates check that the literature is relevant to what they have done in their thesis. Criticisms have been made of literature reviews for being too long, too broad and failing to focus sufficiently on the research questions tackled and the methodology employed. Examiners do not want to read general reviews of all literatures in, for example, human resource management, and/or something on every possible methodology that could have been employed. Rather, they want to see reviews of the literature

relevant to what is done in the thesis (e.g. the specific area within human resource management); it may well be appropriate to indicate why other research areas were not investigated or research questions were not examined, or why other methodologies which could have been employed were rejected, but the emphasis of the literature review needs to be on what has been done and why, not on what has not been done. Reviews of irrelevant literatures, therefore, should be avoided.

6. Does the thesis make use of **data**? If so, is the data used relevant and presented in the most beneficial way? If data is presented in a **table**, then make sure that the table is referred to in the text (tables are not something which are separate from the text, but an integral part thereof - a main reason for them may be to present results succinctly, saving on words and repetitive text, but they need to be embedded in the text, not separate from it). Where data has been used, has the nature of it and what it shows been clearly indicated? If it is a table of results, has the methodology used to arrive at these results been clearly indicated? Is the view/interpretation of the data presented in the thesis one that could be readily accepted by an 'interested bystander', or could the data be 'read' in a different way? If it can, is it possible to legitimate the version presented in the thesis? Has this been done? [Note: There is no sense in throwing lots of high-powered econometrics/statistical analysis at data if there is no clear understanding of the nature of the data and what it shows, or if the view of the data and what it shows that is presented is highly idiosyncratic and unlikely to be shared by others.]
7. If high-powered **statistical techniques** are used, then make sure that any models that are utilised are relevant and, when considering the results, that their significance is clearly understood. Statistical analysis should not be allowed to run away with itself; models or tests should not be conducted just for the sake of it – they should only be used if they are going to contribute to the argument put forward in the thesis. Remember, models are not an end in themselves, but are a means to an end, i.e. aiding better understanding. To this end, the models should be based in theory, and it is important to understand the theory lying behind any model that is tested.
8. Make it clear at each step in your analysis what has been done and why, i.e. provide **signposts** for the reader to help guide them through the thesis. The reader needs to know why something has been done, and how you see it as contributing to the thesis and, unless they are told, they will not know this. A reader should not have to ask themselves questions such as 'What has been done here?' 'Why has this been done?' 'What does this contribute to the overall argument?' You should provide a route map in the **Introduction** to the thesis and signposts throughout (it is useful if each chapter has a short introduction indicating what is to be done in the chapter, and a brief conclusion summarising the key findings and indicating to the reader where you are going to take them in the next chapter).
9. Need to think about your thesis in the round: What is the **overall contribution to knowledge** made by your thesis? Does it have any practical consequences, or is it just a piece of academic research with no practical application? Note that an important part of research training should be 'reflective practice', i.e. the cultivation of the capacity to reflect on what you are doing, both while you are doing it, and after you have done it. Note, there is no need to be modest, but do not make claims which cannot be substantiated and/or adequately defended in your viva!
10. There are University guidelines relating to the **length of a PhD thesis**, currently 80,000 words. Many students write much more than this initially and then try to cut down their work to reach the guideline figure. While excessive length may indicate repetition and an inability to provide focus to the thesis, be careful not to throw out

the baby with the bath water – after editing work has been carried out, the thesis must be coherent and must contain all the key elements and appropriate links/signposts; if chunks of text are omitted merely to try to reach the guideline, then there is the risk that what remains will not pass because of 'gaps' that have been created in the analysis or explanation. Please note that 80,000 words is a guideline, not a hard and fast regulation.

11. Remember that carrying out **editorial work** on a thesis, i.e. putting it into its finished form, including correcting the grammar and spelling, checking for adequate links/signposts, etc., can take much longer than you might think, and it certainly will if you do it properly (everybody underestimates the time needed to undertake editing work!). Note, however, that if editorial work is not done efficiently then it will detract from the quality of the arguments put forward in the thesis and may help to encourage the examiners to ask for more substantial changes than if the thesis had been highly readable. Poor **referencing** is something which is particularly frowned upon.
12. It is important that the thesis, when presented for examination, is in a complete form and has been thoroughly checked for content prior to submission. Once submitted, prior to the occurrence of the viva voce examination, a thesis can not be altered, even if you subsequently realise that there is something wrong in it. This is clearly stated in Senate Regulation 11.6 ("A candidate may not amend, add to or delete from the thesis after it has been submitted, unless this is required as a result of the decision of an Examining Board"). If an error is found prior to the examination, under no account should the examiners be contacted by a student or their supervisors prior to the holding of the viva voce examination.

## **Appendix - Criteria for the award of a PhD**

The degree of doctor may be awarded by the University in recognition of the successful completion of a programme of further study and research, the results of which are judged to constitute an original contribution to learning and to give evidence of:

1. the creation and interpretation of new knowledge, through original research, of a quality to satisfy peer review, extend the forefront of the discipline and merit publication;
2. 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;
3. an ability to relate the results of such study to the general body of knowledge in the discipline;
4. 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; and
5. a detailed understanding of applicable techniques for research and advanced academic enquiry.

### 13.3 Examination

All PhD degree candidates are required to undergo an oral examination.

In the case of candidates re-submitting a thesis for further examination, and if the Examining Board is satisfied that the re-submitted work meets the criteria for the award for which the thesis was submitted, the requirement for a further oral examination may be waived with the agreement of all members of the Examining Board.

#### *Arrangements for examination*

In keeping with Cardiff University regulations, each student has one internal and one external examiner. In the case of students who are also staff members, two external examiners are sought. All examiners are identified and agreed following discussions between the supervisors and the student.

The viva voce is organised by the Director of PGR and the administrator for postgraduate studies. A senior member of the School staff acts as chair for the viva. The chair is made familiar with the relevant regulations about conducting such examinations. Every attempt is made to ensure that students are examined within three months of submitting their thesis.

Prior to the viva, a mock viva is set up for the student, using two members of staff (not involved with the student's supervision) to act as 'examiners' and another member of staff to act as 'chair'. Students will also be encouraged to attend relevant courses run by the Research and Graduate School in the Social Sciences, 'Examination and the Viva' and the SOCSI annual mock PhD viva event.

The Head of the School concerned is responsible for the proper arrangements for the research degree examination. The Head of School may delegate the administrative tasks concerning the submission and examination of a thesis to a senior member of his/her academic staff who then acts as Convenor of the Examining Board. Where the Head of School is also the supervisor of the candidate concerned, the duties of Convenor shall be delegated to a senior member of the academic staff of the School

The Convenor must be satisfied that a *prima facie* case exists for accepting the submission and referring the thesis for examination.

- If satisfied that a *prima facie* case exists for accepting the submission and referring the thesis for examination, the Convenor of the Examining Board shall appoint the internal examiner, where appropriate, and shall make nomination to the Registry of the proposed external examiner(s).
- Determining that a *prima facie* case exists for accepting the submission shall in no way prejudice the findings and decision of the Examining Board.
- Where the Convenor is not satisfied that a *prima facie* case exists for accepting the submission, the candidate has the right to appeal against this decision to the Graduate Development Committee.

### *The examining board*

All Examining Boards for PhD degree candidates shall comprise the following:

- a Chair
- an internal examiner, where required, appointed by the Convenor of the Examining Board
- an external examiner or examiners appointed by the University

In addition:

- No person may assume more than one of the above roles.
- No person involved in the supervision of the candidate shall act in the capacity of any of the above roles.
- An Examining Board for a candidate who is, or who has been, a member of staff shall be constituted with a second external examiner in lieu of the internal examiner.
- The Convenor of the Examining Board may appoint other appropriate persons to act in an advisory capacity. Persons so appointed shall not have the right to vote as members of the Board, but may be invited to attend the oral examination.
- The Convenor of the Examining Board may invite the supervisor(s) to attend the oral examination unless the candidate expresses the wish that the supervisor(s) shall not be present.
- A supervisor attending the oral examination may speak only when invited to do so by the Chair.

### *Appointment and role of the Chair*

The Convenor shall chair the meeting of the Examining Board or shall appoint a senior member of the academic staff to chair the meeting.

The Chair is usually appointed from within the School concerned, but may, with the approval of the Chair of the Graduate Development Committee, be appointed from another School of the University.

The Chair of the Examining Board is required to chair the oral examination and any meeting of the examiners.

The Chair of the Examining Board shall be independent in the examining process, and shall be responsible to the Head of School for the conduct of the examination.

### *Appointment of the internal examiner*

The internal examiner shall be appointed by the Convenor of the Examining Board and must be:

- non-probationary member of the academic staff or senior research staff, holding a contract of employment equivalent to at least 50% of that of a full-time member;
- part-time member of the academic/research staff (satisfying the above requirements)
- The internal examiner shall usually be appointed from within the School concerned, but may be appointed from another School of the University.

The Chair of the Graduate Development Committee may, on the special recommendation of the Convenor of the Examining Board concerned, approve the appointment of a second external examiner in lieu of an internal examiner.

### *Appointment of the external examiners*

Nomination of the external examiner(s) shall be made in writing by the Convenor of the Examining Board to the Registry.

The appointment of the external examiner(s) shall be made by the Chair of the Graduate Development Committee.

The nominated external examiner shall possess specialist knowledge and expertise in the subject area of the research, and should normally:

- be experienced in research and have published
- have experience of the UK research degree examination process, and particularly for the degree for which the thesis has been submitted
- hold a research degree
- hold/have held appointment within the university system at Senior Lecturer grade or above (although, in certain cases, it may be appropriate to appoint from outside the university sector, e.g. a leading industrialist, researcher or professional practitioner).

The nominated external examiner shall not have direct professional or personal knowledge of the candidate, and should **not** normally:

- be a former staff member of the University, unless at least five years have elapsed since retirement/resignation;
- be a former higher degree student of the school concerned, unless at least five years have elapsed since the date of her/his qualification;
- be invited, on a frequent basis, to examine research degrees in the same school.

Where all the criteria above cannot be met, the Convenor of the Examining Board may submit a special case for the consideration of the Chair of the Graduate Development Committee.

#### *Location of the examination*

The oral examination shall normally be held at the University. However, the Chair of Graduate Development Committee may, in exceptional circumstances, permit the oral examination to be held elsewhere, provided that this is with the unanimous agreement of the Chair, the examiners and the candidate, and that suitable accommodation and other arrangements for its conduct have been made.

The oral examination shall normally be held on a face-to-face basis, with all concerned present in the same place, at the same time. However, the Chair of Graduate Development Committee may, in exceptional circumstances, allow for arrangements to be made for the examination to take place through electronic media. The University will not give approval to the use of telephone links alone for the purposes of examinations. Examination through electronic media shall be in accordance with the 'Procedure and Guidelines for the Conduct of Viva Voce Examinations by Electronic Means'.

#### *Timing of the examination*

The University expects the oral examination to be held within three months of the submission of the thesis.

In exceptional circumstances only, can the oral examination be deferred for a period exceeding twelve months from the date of submission of the thesis.

#### *Information provided for the examiners*

The Convenor of the Examining Board shall ensure that each examiner is sent one copy of the thesis.

The necessary forms and instructions for the conduct of the examination, and the forms for payment shall be sent to the external examiner(s) by the Registry.

The necessary forms and instructions for the conduct of the examination shall be provided to the internal examiner by the Convenor of the Examining Board.

#### *Special provision*

A candidate requiring special provision for his/her examination shall submit a written application, supported by documentary evidence, to the Convenor of the Examining Board.

#### *The reporting of special/extenuating circumstances*

A candidate shall provide a statement (supported by documentary evidence where appropriate) setting out any special or extenuating circumstances which may have an effect on his/her performance in the examination to the Convenor of the Examining Board.

#### *Before the oral examination*

The examiners shall independently assess the thesis and each prepare a written report on their reading of the work, and submit these to the Chair of the Examining Board before the oral examination.

A candidate's supervisor(s) shall have the right to convey to the Convenor of the Examining Board any concerns relevant to the candidate's research project, the resulting thesis or its examination which the supervisor(s) consider(s) the Board should take into account prior to reaching its decision.

The supervisor(s) shall convey these concerns, in writing, both to the Convenor and to the candidate as soon as practicable after the presentation of the thesis.

The Convenor shall invite the candidate to respond to the concerns. The candidate may submit his/her own written statement within 10 working days of the date of the note from the Convenor.

The Convenor shall provide any written submission from a candidate's supervisor(s) and any response by the candidate to the Chair of the Examining Board before the oral examination. The Examining Board shall be asked to consider the statements(s) prior to reaching its decision.

#### *Recommendations for the award of PhD*

Examining Boards, in recommending a candidate for the degree, shall certify that the thesis submitted by the candidate substantially covers the programme of research approved for him/her. Examining Boards considering PhD submissions may recommend one of the following options:

- that the candidate be approved for the award of PhD subject to the completion of such minor corrections as may be required by the Examining Board. Corrections should be completed within a period of four weeks. The Examining Board may stipulate that the corrections made shall be scrutinised by either/both examiner(s) prior to the award process being initiated.
- that the candidate be approved for the award of PhD subject to such corrections and amendments as may be required by the Examining Board. Corrections and amendments shall be completed within a period of twelve working weeks. The Examining Board may stipulate that the corrections made shall be scrutinised by either/both examiner(s) prior to the award process being initiated.
- that the candidate be not approved for the award of PhD but be allowed to modify the thesis and re-submit it for the award of PhD on one further occasion only, upon payment of a re-submission fee. The re-submission shall take place within a period

not exceeding one year from the date of the official notification to the candidate of the outcome of the examination.

- that the candidate be not approved for the award of PhD, but be approved for the award of MPhil subject to the completion of such minor corrections as may be required by the Examining Board. The Examining Board may stipulate that the corrections made shall be scrutinised by either/both examiner(s) prior to the award process being initiated. Corrections shall be completed within a period of four working weeks from the date of the official notification to the candidate of the outcome of the examination.
- that the candidate be not approved for the award of PhD, but be allowed to modify the thesis and re-submit it for the award of MPhil on one further occasion only, upon payment of the examination fee. The re-submission shall take place within a period not exceeding one year from the date of the official notification to the candidate of the outcome of the examination.
- that the candidate be not approved for the award of PhD and no further submission is permitted.

#### *After the examination*

Both copies of every thesis approved by the examiners shall become the property of the University.

The Convenor shall arrange for the deposit of one copy of a successful research thesis in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, and for the deposit of a second copy in the University Library.

All copies of a failed thesis submitted by the candidate shall be returned to the candidate, once the process of examination (and the hearing of any subsequent appeal) has been completed.

After completion of the examination, the Convenor shall return the completed Report and Result form to the Registry. The form will contain the examiners' reports and the Examining Board's formal recommendation of result. The formal recommendation of result sheet shall record the exact decision of the Examining Board and shall be signed by the Chair and the examiners.

Following receipt of the examiners' reports and the Examining Board's formal recommendation of result, the Registry shall inform the candidate in writing of the outcome of the examination.

Candidates who are not recommended by the Examining Board for the award of PhD may appeal against the decision reached, in accordance with 'Cardiff University Appeals Procedure (Postgraduate Research Degrees)'.

#### *Disagreement between examiners*

When a recommendation cannot be agreed as the result of a dispute arising between the examiners, the examination shall be discontinued and the Chair of the Examining Board shall report the matter to the Chair of the Graduate Development Committee, who shall make such arrangements as are necessary for the resolving of the disagreement.

#### **14. RESEARCH STUDENT'S DISSATISFACTION AND COMPLAINTS**

It is expected that most problems encountered by research students in the course of their studies will be able to be resolved within the School

Normally a research student with a particular problem will refer it to his/her supervisor, or if it concerns his/her relationship with the supervisor, to the Director of Postgraduate Studies (Research).

In the event that a research student is seriously dissatisfied with the arrangements for his/her research programme, and is unable to reach agreement with the Head of School over those or alternative arrangements, the student may refer his/her problem to the Dean of Graduate Studies based in Academic Registry.

The Dean of Graduate Studies will then attempt to negotiate a solution with the Head of School in SONMS.

If all else fails, the student has recourse to the University's Complaints Procedure.

## 15. USEFUL WEB ADDRESSES

Enrolment

<http://www.cf.ac.uk/regis/enrolment/index.html>

Contact: [enrolment@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:enrolment@cardiff.ac.uk) 029 2087 6211

Postgraduate Finance Division

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/fince/students/postgraduate/index.html>

Contact: [fees@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:fees@cardiff.ac.uk)

Postgraduate Admissions

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/regis/general/procedures/postgraduate/index.html>

Contact: [admissions@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:admissions@cardiff.ac.uk) 029 2087 9999

The International Office

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/for/prospective/inter/study/arrive/>

Contact: [international@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:international@cardiff.ac.uk) 029 2087 4432

University Graduate Centre

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/gradc/>

University Health Centre

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/osheu/healthcentre/>

University Chaplaincy (multi-faith)

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/chaplaincy/>

University Student Advisory Service

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/advice/>

Careers Service

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/carsv/>

Cardiff Portal

<http://portal.cf.ac.uk>

A Code of Practice for Research Degrees

<http://www.cf.ac.uk/regis/sfs/rdqh/index.html>

University Academic Registry Research Degrees Handbook

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/regis/sfs/regis/index.html>

Information Services for Researchers

<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/insrv/forresearchers/index.html>