

## **Code of Practice for research students Starting their course in 2015-16**

### **Introduction**

This Code of Practice is for students studying for a research degree<sup>1</sup>. It also applies to those students in the probationary year of a PhD, or taking the Certificate of Postgraduate Study. It has been issued by the University's main academic authority, the General Board, to make clear what you should expect during your study in terms of supervision, support and assessment. Of equal importance, it also sets out what the University and those responsible for your study should expect of you. These mutual responsibilities and expectations are intended to provide a framework within which you can flourish on your course.

This Code is issued for new students starting their course in 2015-16 and applies for the duration of their course. It is issued each year, and all those with responsibility for research students are made aware of changes between issues.

Although this Code draws on the University's formal requirements as set out in its Statutes and Ordinances, it does not override them.

A glossary of terms and list of useful links are included as appendices, but if you have any questions about this Code please do raise them with your Supervisor or the Director of Graduate Education in your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution).

A checklist of key requirements is included at the start of this Code. This is intended as a quick guide, and must be read in conjunction with the detailed information provided in the Code itself.

Professor Graham Virgo  
Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Education

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<sup>1</sup> PhD, EngD, EdD, MD, MLitt, MSc or an MPhil which is examined by thesis and oral examination only.

## **Checklist of key requirements**

This checklist is intended as a quick guide, and must be read in conjunction with the detailed information provided in the Code itself.

C1. You will be a member of a Department, Faculty or University Partner Institution (para2).

C2. When recommending your admission, the Head of your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution) will have confirmed that the facilities needed for your proposed course of research will be available (para 3).

C3. Your Degree Committee oversees your research course (para 4), and is responsible for appointment of your supervisory team (para 5) and for exercising academic oversight of you and your supervisor, including resolution of academic problems if these cannot be resolved at a more local level (para 6).

C4. Your Degree Committee is responsible for monitoring your progress and is the formal body which will need to recommend whether you are registered after your probationary period (para 7).

C5. Your Degree Committee will appoint your Examiners, and will be responsible for investigating and responding to any complaints and examination appeals (para 10).

C6. Research degree provision in your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution) is overseen by a Director of Graduate Education (para 11). He or she has specific responsibilities in relation to oversight of your study, provision of information, and setting out expectations for the frequency of supervision (para 12-16).

C7. You will have a Supervisory Team consisting of a minimum of a Supervisor and an Adviser (para 18). Your Supervisor is the main person appointed to oversee and help you with your study (para 23-37). Your Adviser acts as a second point of contact for you for academic advice (after your Supervisor) (para 38-40).

C8. You are expected to take full advantage of the facilities, teaching and supervision offered to you and to be proactive and self-directed in your study, and to make independent use of the facilities available (para 44).

C9. You should have the opportunity to seek formal feedback from your Supervisor, and your Supervisor should have the opportunity to give such feedback (para 29).

C10. Your Supervisor is required to submit formal reports on your progress each term. These reports are available to you and the Director of Graduate Education in your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution), your

Degree Committee, your College Tutor and the Board of Graduate Studies (para 32).

C11. You are responsible for the quality of all your academic work (para 48), and are expected to follow the academic conventions and comply with the requirements that pertain in your subject (para 50).

C12. At the end of your first year a formal examination will be made to determine whether or not you should be permitted to continue with your course (para 54). Your Supervisor will make a recommendation on the outcome through a 'registration report', but must not be formally involved in making a decision on whether you continue. This is the responsibility of your Degree Committee (para 59).

C13. If you are a PhD student you are expected to complete your research for the degree in three years (or five years if you are a part-time student), and to submit your dissertation for examination within four years (seven years if you are part-time) (para 49).

C14. If you are experiencing difficulties with your study you are expected to discuss these with your Supervisor without delay (para 46). If you are experiencing difficulties with your Supervisor you are expected to raise these with the Director of Graduate Education in your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution) (para 17).

C15. If at any point your Supervisor is concerned about your progress, he or she is required to submit a supervision report making this clear, and to alert the Director of Graduate Education in your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution) (para 60).

C16. The Board of Graduate Studies has the power to remove you from the Register of Graduate Students (that is, make you leave your course) if your Degree Committee has satisfied the Board that you have not been working to its satisfaction; or you have not complied with the conditions laid down in your case; or, in the Board's opinion, you are not likely to reach the standard of the MSc, MLitt, MPhil, or of any other qualification for which you might be registered as a candidate (para 64).

C17. Your Degree Committee will appoint your Examiners, at least one of whom will be external to the University. Your Supervisor may not be one of your Examiners (para 67).

C18. Your Degree Committee will appoint an Independent Chair to oversee your examination in certain circumstances (para 76).

C19. In certain circumstances, you may make a complaint about the conduct or result of your examination under the Regulations for the Review of Examinations for postgraduate Qualifications (para 83).

C20. There are other complaints procedures to cover academic, non-academic and personal matters (para 84).

### **Responsibilities and expectations of those involved in your study**

1. The following section describes the roles of the various individuals who share responsibility for your course of study, and also your responsibilities as a research student. It also describes the roles of the various formal committees that oversee your progress and the award of your degree.

### **Your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution)**

2. All research students are formally members of a Department (which may be part of a larger Faculty) or a Faculty, or University Partner Institution (UPI). This is referred to as your **Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution)** in this Code of Practice.

3. The **Head of your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution)** is responsible for personnel matters within your Faculty, Department or UPI. He or she may reasonably expect to be involved in resolution of any difficulties that fall into this category between staff and students. When recommending your admission, the Head of your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution) will have confirmed that the facilities needed for your proposed course of research will be available.

### **Your Degree Committee**

4. The **Degree Committee** for your Faculty (or the Faculty with which your University Partner Institution is associated) oversees the conduct of research courses covered by this Code. Your offer of admission will indicate your Degree Committee.

5. Your Degree Committee is responsible for appointing your supervisory team, and will not appoint someone if it is of the view that there is likely to be a conflict of interest. Your Degree Committee determines and monitors the maximum number of students its Supervisors may have, and will require a formal case to be made to exceed the limit it has set. In appointing your Supervisor, your Degree Committee will also give due regard to the overall workload he or she is already carrying.

6. Your Degree Committee is also responsible for exercising academic oversight of you and your Supervisor, including resolution of academic problems if these cannot be resolved at a more local level. The Degree Committee is responsible for offering your Supervisor and Adviser appropriate induction and training. In practice these responsibilities may be exercised by the Director of Graduate Education in your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution) on behalf of the Degree Committee.

7. Your Degree Committee is responsible for monitoring your progress. It is responsible for following up with your Supervisor if he or she has not submitted supervision and progress reports when they are due, and will review these reports and take appropriate action. The Degree Committee is the formal body which will need to recommend to the Board of Graduate Studies whether you are registered for a given qualification as a Graduate Student after your probationary period.

8. If you need to request any special permissions, such as to intermit or leave to work away from Cambridge, the Degree Committee will need to support your request before it can be considered by the Board of Graduate Studies.

9. In the case of the MPhil Degree and CPGS, it is the Degree Committee which will award you the qualification (on recommendation of your Examiners). For other degrees, the Degree Committee will recommend a result to the Board of Graduate Studies.

10. Your Degree Committee will appoint your Examiners and provide them with advice and documentation; and will be responsible for investigating and responding to any complaints and examination appeals.

### **Your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution)'s Director of Graduate Education**

11. Research degree provision in each Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution) is overseen by a **Director of Graduate Education**<sup>2</sup>. He or she will usually be supported by a Faculty/Department committee with responsibility for graduate education. You will be told the name of the person in who carries the responsibilities of the Director of Graduate Education in your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution) in the Course Handbook, and introduced to him or her as part of your induction.

12. The role of the Director of Graduate Education and the roles performed by other individuals and committees responsible for graduate students should be made clear to you through both induction and course literature.

13. The Director of Graduate Education is responsible for ensuring that members of your supervisory team are assigned and that necessary arrangements for academic and administrative support are available to you. He or she will monitor your progress and, in consultation with the Degree Committee, will ensure that back-up arrangements are made if your Supervisor is absent.

14. Your Director of Graduate Education will ensure that you are provided with necessary information, at each stage of your study, about your course

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<sup>2</sup> Titles may vary, and in some Faculties this role may be undertaken by the Secretary of the Degree Committee.

through the Course Handbook and your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution)'s website. This will include information about Health and Safety.

15. In consultation with the Graduate Education Committee, your Director of Graduate Education will set out expectations for the frequency of your supervision. This will include expectations for formal opportunities for you to seek, and your Supervisors to give you feedback on your work and progress. The frequency of supervision may vary according to the research project and the stage of study. He or she will also monitor the performance of your Supervisor. The Director of Graduate Education will also advise your Supervisor on appropriate skills training for you.

16. The Director of Graduate Education will ensure that all research students in your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution) have the opportunity to provide feedback on the content, delivery and administration of their course, and will ensure that this input is taken into account. He or she will oversee and coordinate periodic strategic reviews of the course.

17. Your Director of Graduate Education is a source of advice if you experience difficulties that cannot be resolved directly, and may act as an intermediary between you and your Supervisor if difficulties arise. If you experience difficulties with your Supervisor you are expected to raise these with the Director of Graduate Education in your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution) without delay.

### **Your Supervisory Team**

18. Your **Supervisory Team** is expected to help you with your research. All students studying for the PhD, EdD, EngD, MLitt or MSc (including probationary students not at first registered for the degree, or those initially studying for the CPGS) are required to have a supervisory team consisting of a minimum of the Principal Supervisor (normally referred to as your Supervisor) and the Adviser. Candidates for the MPhil examined only by thesis are required to have a Supervisor but do not need to have an Adviser.

19. Your **Principal Supervisor** (Supervisor) is appointed by the Degree Committee for your Faculty. If your project is interdisciplinary, the Degree Committee may appoint a second Supervisor<sup>3</sup>, but your Principal Supervisor is primarily responsible for directing and assisting you in your study or research, and it is with him or her that the Degree Committee and Board of Graduate Studies will normally correspond.

20. In the sciences and technology, group research may be the norm and you and post-doctoral researchers may work alongside your Supervisor on a

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<sup>3</sup> Where two supervisors are working jointly, your Principal Supervisor will consult with your Second Supervisor on your progress.

daily basis; in some cases, you may be supervised on a day-to-day basis by a postdoctoral member of the team while the Head of the team takes the formal role of your Principal Supervisor. In this case, the postdoctoral researcher may be registered as your Second Supervisor.

21. If you are registered with a University Partner Institution (UPI) and your Principal Supervisor is not a University employee, your UPI will nominate an appropriate University Supervisor for you for appointment by your Degree Committee. The same arrangements will be made if your Principal Supervisor is not a University employee, for example because he or she is an academic at another university, or is employed by an industrial partner. The level of input from your University Supervisor will be subject to agreement with the UPI or other organisation, but he or she is expected to retain overall oversight of your study, and to ensure that you are being supervised in line with this Code and the University's regulations. In practice he or she may also be involved as a genuine research collaborator and play a second Supervisor role.

22. Your Supervisory Team is supported by the Director of Graduate Education for your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution) and its Graduate Education Committee and/or Degree Committee, which may appoint additional people to the team as required.

### **Your (Principal) Supervisor**

23. Your **Principal Supervisor** – usually simply called your Supervisor - is the main person appointed by the Degree Committee to oversee and help you with your study.

24. In agreeing to take on the role, your Supervisor will have established the suitability of your research topic, in the light of resource availability, the University's timescale for submission of the dissertation, and your background and aptitude. If you are a part-time student, your Supervisor will have been responsible for establishing at interview your pattern of attendance including arrangements for supervision, and training.

25. Your Supervisor will ensure that you are told about the conventions and requirements that pertain to your subject with respect, for example, to scholarly writing; use of archives and collections; and integrity in collecting and analysing data. He or she will advise you on relevant literature, methodology and academic conventions pertaining in your field, including how to present your research and how to acknowledge the work of others to avoid plagiarism. These requirements will also be set out in the Course Handbook and explained to you during your induction.

26. Your Supervisor is responsible for ensuring that you are aware of health and safety issues; relevant University policy on research ethics and ethical matters specific to your research area; University policy on working with children or vulnerable adults (where relevant); University policy on Animal Welfare (where relevant) and intellectual property rights.

27. If you are being sponsored, your Supervisor will ensure that the terms of the sponsorship agreement and any implications regarding the ownership of intellectual property rights are made clear to you at the outset and are honoured during the course and in the examination of your dissertation.

28. Your Supervisor is expected to be familiar with this Code, course literature and advice provided by your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution)'s Graduate Education Committee, the Degree Committee, and the central University authorities. He or she is expected to attend training and events for Supervisors as prescribed by your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution) and Degree Committee. All Faculties/Departments (or University Partner Institutions) are expected to specify their expectations for the frequency and form of supervisions in their Course Handbook, and your Supervisor should be aware of what is expected. Your Supervisor will establish an effective means of communication with you, including making clear the frequency and timings of meetings, what will be required at meetings and who is expected to initiate a meeting.

29. The regularity with which graduate students meet with their Supervisor varies according to subject. In the arts, humanities and social sciences, students may work alone for sustained periods and may meet their Supervisor only at formal supervisions. However, in the sciences and technology, group research may be the norm and a Supervisor, his or her students and post-doctoral researchers work alongside each other on a daily basis. The frequency of meetings will also change over time and are likely to be more frequent to start with, during the planning stages, and during the writing-up phase. All students should have the opportunity to seek formal feedback from their Supervisor, and Supervisors should have the opportunity to give such feedback.

30. If you are studying for the PhD, and the outcome of your examination for the degree is approval subject to major corrections or re-submission and re-examination for the degree, your Supervisor should agree a limited pattern of supervision with you.

31. Your Supervisor will read and comment on draft chapters so that you have the opportunity to incorporate any feedback into subsequent writing. Your Supervisor is not expected to proofread your dissertation. Your Supervisor should respond promptly – given adequate notice – to requests from you to meet and to comment on your work, and you should agree arrangements, including a plan for your work and a timetable for production of draft chapters, between the two of you. If your Supervisor is to be away from Cambridge for an extended period, he or she should ensure that you and the Director of Graduate Education are aware of this and should inform you of back-up supervisory arrangements.

32. Your Supervisor will monitor your progress against the timetable and plan for your work you have agreed together, and take appropriate action as laid down in your Course Handbook if you do not keep in contact, or your



progress is poor. He or she is required to submit formal reports on your progress each term via CGSRS (the Cambridge Graduate Student Reporting System on CamSIS). Reports are available to you and your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution)'s Director of Graduate Education, your Degree Committee, your College Tutor and Board of Graduate Studies, who all take an interest in your progress. Your Supervisor should give an honest but constructive appraisal of your progress which will help you in your study.

33. Your Supervisor is required to report to those listed above immediately if you appear, in his or her opinion, not to be progressing satisfactorily and may be in danger of failing an examination, or not likely to make the standard for progression to the next stage. In such cases, your supervision reports will be considered by the Degree Committee and the Board of Graduate Studies, and will be used in evaluating any application you may make for an examination allowance or in cases of dispute.

34. Your Supervisor is also expected to advise you on planning your personal and skills development, and will encourage you to attend training. He or she may require you to attend Health and Safety training.

35. Your Supervisor will be expected to provide an academic commentary on any applications you make to the Board of Graduate Studies, for example for leave to work or reside away from Cambridge; permission to intermit studies; to defer submission of your dissertation; to restrict access to your dissertation; or for funding. If you are funded by a Research Council or other major sponsor, your Supervisor is expected to make sure that they are informed promptly if your work is delayed or seriously affected by illness or other grave cause.

36. Your supervisor will advise you on publication of your research and may be able to offer advice on further study or careers in your specific research area. He or she will respond promptly to reasonable requests for references for you.

37. Your Supervisor or second Supervisor (if appointed) must not participate in the formal decision on examination of the work submitted by you as part of the registration exercise for the degree, and cannot participate in your formal examination for the degree.

### **Your Adviser**

38. If you are studying for any qualification covered by this Code other than the MPhil examined only by thesis and oral, your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution) will appoint an **Adviser** for you. Your Adviser might not be in exactly the same research area as you and your Supervisor, nor necessarily in the same Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution), but will be able to bring sufficient expertise to your Supervisory Team to act as a second point of contact for you for academic advice (after your Supervisor); and to provide supervisory cover in the absence of your

Principal Supervisor. Your Adviser may make him or herself available to read your work and discuss your progress as reasonably agreed with you and your Supervisor.

39. Your Adviser may participate in the formal examination of your progress and registration exercises but, in the case of a PhD student, should not be appointed as your internal Examiner for the degree unless he or she has had little or no involvement with your research, and your Degree Committee is satisfied that there is no potential for a conflict of interest.

40. Your Adviser is not required to provide regular, formal supervision; write supervision reports; nor provide pastoral support for you or your Supervisor, nor to act as go-between you, although he or she may offer advice to either party if asked to do so.

### **Your responsibilities as a research student**

41. You are expected to keep the University informed of changes in your contact details, and to inform your College and Supervisor promptly if you cease to attend your course through ill health or other grave cause, or withdraw from it. You are also expected to pay fees in a timely manner.

42. When you matriculated as a student at the University, you promised to abide by the University's regulations and Statutes and Ordinances, including those relating to Graduate Students and those concerning discipline and avoidance of plagiarism.

43. Under the regulations for Graduate Students you are required to reside in Cambridge in term time (unless you are a part-time student) and to obtain the permission of your Supervisor, Degree Committee, College and the Board of Graduate Studies before undertaking research outside Cambridge. In practice the demands of your research will almost certainly require you to be in Cambridge throughout the year. Formal permission from the Board of Graduate Studies for leave to work away is not required for conferences and short research visits.

44. You are expected to take full advantage of the facilities, teaching and supervision offered to you by your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution), and to keep your Supervisor informed of any circumstances affecting your academic performance or participation in any part of the course. You are expected to be proactive and self-directed in all aspects of your study, and to make independent use of library and other available resources, including laboratory facilities where appropriate.

45. If you are a full time student, you are expected to devote around 40 hours per week to your course of study or course of research for the full duration of the course, with appropriate short breaks for holidays.

46. You should meet regularly with your Supervisor, and keep him or her informed of your progress. If you are experiencing problems with your work you are expected to discuss these with your Supervisor without delay. You should hand in work as agreed with your Supervisor, and should produce progress reports and training log if and when required by your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution). If you experience difficulties in meeting with your Supervisor, you should contact the Director of Graduate Education in your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution) without delay.

47. You are expected to access and comment on your supervision reports, and to discuss them with your Supervisor. If you are experiencing difficulties, you should seek advice and help from your Supervisor, Adviser, Director of Graduate Education or your College Tutor.

### ***Your dissertation and other written work submitted for examination***

48. You are expected to take responsibility for the quality of all your academic work, including the final version of your dissertation submitted for examination, and any subsequent revisions or corrections which may be required by your Examiners. Note that the advice and guidance of your Supervisor carries no guarantee of success at examination, nor will encouragement or the approval of a piece of work by your Supervisor constitute grounds for complaint if you fail in the examination.

49. If you are a PhD student you are expected to complete your research for the degree in three years (five years if you are a part-time student), and to submit your dissertation for examination within four years (seven years if you are part-time). You should make sure that you are aware of the timetable set by your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution) for feasibility reports and progress reports during the course, and ensure that you organise your work to meet the deadlines set, including the final date for submission. Other research degrees will likewise have an expected submission date, and your Supervisor will advise you on an appropriate timetable to meet this deadline. You will need to seek special permission from the Board of Graduate Studies to submit after the four years allowed for the PhD.

50. You are expected to follow the conventions and comply with the requirements that pertain in your subject with respect, for example, to scholarly writing; use of archives and collections; and integrity in collecting and analysing data. You should ensure that you comply with the requirement for honesty in presenting your research, and the conventions for acknowledging the work of others in your subject, and ensure that you understand how to avoid plagiarism. The University reserves the right to require the submission of your work in both electronic and paper format and to submit your work to examination with plagiarism detection software.

51. You should discuss drafts of your dissertation with your Supervisor and confer on its state of readiness for submission. Where your Supervisor is unable to comment, for good reason, on drafts of your work in reasonable

time, you should contact your Adviser for assistance. If your Adviser is unable to assist, you should contact the Director of Graduate Education in your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution).

52. Where it is not possible for you to come to a mutual decision with your Supervisor about the readiness of your work for examination, you have the right to decide to submit without your Supervisor's consent. Ultimate responsibility for the academic quality of the dissertation and the timing of submission lies with you.

53. If after examination for the Degree you are required to make corrections to your dissertation, your Degree Committee will normally adhere to the time limits imposed by the Board of Graduate Studies which are up to a maximum of three months for minor corrections and six months for major corrections.

## **Your Progress**

### ***Registration for the PhD, EngD and EdD Degree***

54. The majority of candidates for a PhD, EngD, EdD, MSc or MLitt are admitted on a probationary basis. You may be registered in the first instance for a Certificate of Postgraduate Studies (CPGS), or a master's degree, or may not be registered for any qualification. At the end of your first year (or second year for a part-time student or where the Board of Graduate Studies has approved a different time-frame), a formal progress examination will take place to determine whether or not you should be registered as a candidate for the degree (that is permitted to continue).

55. If you have been registered for a qualification in the first instance, your performance in the examination for this qualification may form part of the registration examination for the PhD, EngD, EdD, MSc or MLitt, but a pass in the examination for the qualification concerned will not in itself be sufficient to guarantee registration for the higher degree.

56. If you have not been registered for any qualification in your first year, a formal registration examination (sometimes termed a progress examination) will be carried out. This normally takes the form of a piece of written work, which sets out work in progress and includes your proposal for further research, and may include a viva. Your Degree Committee may use a different form of examination, which will have been approved by the Board of Graduate Studies. You will be informed of the details of the registration exercise at the start of your course. The registration examination will formally be carried out by at least two Assessors, neither of whom is your Principal Supervisor or second Supervisor (if appointed). Your Adviser may be an Assessor provided that there is no potential for a conflict of interests.

57. If you are part of a research group, at least one Assessor will be from outside your immediate group. A report will be made by the Assessors on the outcome of the progress examination, their recommendation on registration

for the degree and any feedback they wish to provide for you and your Supervisor.

58. Your Supervisor will also report on your progress in the light of the Assessors' feedback and make his or her own recommendation on the outcome through a 'registration report'. He or she may be asked to attend a viva, but must not be formally involved in making a decision on whether or not to recommend to the Degree Committee that you continue. Your Degree Committee will consider your Assessors' reports together with your Supervisor's recommendation and, on the strength of these, recommend the outcome to the Board of Graduate Studies.

59. The Degree Committee may recommend that you either

- a) be registered for the PhD, EngD or EdD degree; or
- b) be registered for a lower degree (e.g. a student seeking a PhD may be registered for the MSc/MLitt or MPhil at this stage) and/or be offered a further assessment for the purposes of reviewing your status. If offered, this assessment will be completed before the submission of your thesis for examination for the lower degree or certificate or
- c) be allowed to revise and resubmit your registration report after a defined period (normally not more than one year) for a second progress examination; or
- d) be removed permanently from the Register of Graduate Students and not be permitted to continue with your study.

***If your progress is unsatisfactory***

60. If at any point your Supervisor is concerned about your progress, he or she is required to submit a supervision report via CGSRS making this clear, and to alert the Director of Graduate Education in your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution). This report will be available to you, your College, your Degree Committee and the Board of Graduate Studies. You may be called to a meeting with the Director of Graduate Education, your Supervisor, and other members of your supervisory team.

61. The concerns will be put to you at this meeting, and possible remedies explored. A written record of the meeting, including any agreed action, will be given to you. If deadlines have been set for work to be submitted, or patterns of required attendance set out, or any other requirements stated, these will be specified in writing. The consequences of non-compliance with these requirements will be made clear to you - these may range from a warning that you are in danger of failing the examination, through to the possibility of your removal from the register of graduate students, depending on the severity of the problem.

62. If it is evident that you are suffering from ill health or other personal difficulty, you will be referred to your College Tutor for help. In some circumstances, you may be referred to the University's Occupational Health Service, Counselling Service or Disability Resource Centre.

63. Reasonable time will be allowed for you to improve. However, should your progress continue to be unsatisfactory or should you persist in not complying with the requests of your supervisory team, the Director of Graduate Education in your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution) will refer the matter to the Degree Committee with a recommendation that you should not continue on the course and be removed from the Register of Graduate Students. You will be invited to respond in writing to the case made by the Director of Graduate Studies, and your response will be considered by the Degree Committee.

### ***Permanent removal from the Register of Graduate Students***

64. The Board of Graduate Studies has the power to remove you from the Register of Graduate Students if your Degree Committee has satisfied the Board that:

- a) you have not been working to its satisfaction; or
- b) you have not complied with the conditions laid down in your case; or
- c) in its opinion, you are not likely to reach the standard of the MSc, MLitt, MPhil, or of any other qualification for which you might be registered as a candidate.

65. In view of the third of these provisions, Degree Committees must consider whether you might be re-registered for a lower qualification than the one currently sought.

66. If you are taken off the Register of Graduate Students, you will lose your student status. If you consider that you have been unfairly treated, provision exists for you to make representations under the Student Complaints Procedure.

## **Examination for the Degree**

### ***Appointment of your Examiners***

67. Your Degree Committee will appoint two Examiners for your research degree. Except in the case of the CPGS, one of these must be an External Examiner. The appointment of an internal person as the second Examiner is highly desirable but not essential and, where no suitable Internal Examiner can be found, a second External Examiner will be appointed. Note that neither Examiner may be your Supervisor.

68. The Degree Committee will normally consult your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution) and Supervisor about the suitability and availability of Examiners, and will take appropriate steps to ensure that there is no potential conflict of interest between either you or your Supervisor, and either of your Examiners. If you are a member of staff of the University, both of your Examiners will normally be external to the University. You may not choose the Examiners, but the Degree Committee will inform you at the earliest opportunity who has been nominated. If you have good reason to object to any given individual as an Examiner, you should make this known and the Degree Committee will consider any such objection when making an appointment.

69. Your Examiners will normally be expert in one or more aspects of your dissertation. It is not expected that either will be expert in the whole field covered by the dissertation, and their expertise will normally be complementary.

70. An Examiner who has not examined for the University before, will where possible, be paired with an experienced Examiner. If both Examiners are inexperienced, then the Degree Committee will appoint an Independent Chair.

71. The Degree Committee will be the Examiners' main point of contact throughout the examination period.

### ***Your Internal Examiner***

72. In exceptional circumstances, your Adviser, or an Assessor of an earlier progress report, may be appointed to examine your dissertation providing the Degree Committee is satisfied that his or her involvement in the development of your dissertation was not so great as to prejudice his or her role as Examiner.

73. Your Internal Examiner is expected to organise your oral examination (viva) by contacting both you and the External Examiner about your availability. The date for your oral should be fixed as soon as possible after submission and the examination will be held, if possible, within six to eight weeks.

74. Your Internal Examiner is responsible for ensuring that your External Examiner is aware of the requirements for the examination and for ensuring that their reports are sent to the Degree Committee promptly after the oral. If no suitable Internal Examiner can be found and a second External is appointed, the Degree Committee Secretary will advise the Examiners of their duties and arrange the oral examination.

### ***Your External Examiner***

75. Your External Examiner is expected to provide an external view of the merits of your dissertation and its defence in your oral examination, and to set

the dissertation and its examination in the context of the standards for the degree in the UK.

### ***The Independent Chair***

76. The Degree Committee will appoint an Independent Chair to oversee your examination in the following circumstances:

- a) where two External Examiners have been appointed neither of whom, in the view of the Degree Committee, are experienced Cambridge Examiners;
- b) where, in the view of the Degree Committee, the Internal Examiner is inexperienced;
- c) in cases of re-examination where a second viva examination is required;
- d) for any candidate for whom the Degree Committee has identified concerns regarding the examination;
- e) if you, as the candidate, have satisfied the Degree Committee that an Independent Chair is required;
- f) in any other circumstances where the Degree Committee has satisfied the Board of Graduate Studies that the appointment is required.

77. The Independent Chair is expected to ensure that the examination process is fair and that you have the opportunity to defend your dissertation and to respond to all questions posed by the Examiners. The Independent Chair will ensure that questioning by the Examiners is conducted fairly and professionally, and that they adhere to the University's regulations and procedures. If required, he or she will advise both you and your Examiners on the regulations. Before the oral examination, the Independent Chair will ensure that your Examiners have completed their preliminary independent reports, and that your Examiners' joint report is completed at the end of the examination, and all reports are submitted to the Degree Committee in a timely fashion.

78. The Chair is not expected to question you about your work, and is not expected to have received or read a copy of your dissertation in preparation for the examination.

79. In the case of disagreement between your Examiners, the Chair's role will be confined to advising the Examiners on their options; the Chair does not have an additional casting vote but should use his/her best endeavours to help the Examiners to reach an agreed position.

### ***Requesting an Examination Allowance (restricted to the MPhil and the CPGS only)***

80. If your preparation for the examination for the MPhil or CPGS has been hindered due to extenuating circumstances beyond your control, for example



ill health, bereavement, or religious observance, then you should seek advice from your College Tutor who may apply to the Board of Graduate Studies for an examination allowance. A request for an allowance must be accompanied by evidence of the extenuating circumstances, and must be received by the Board of Graduate Studies within three months of the date of the letter which gives you formally the outcome of your examination.

### ***Requesting a Review of the Results of your Examination***

81. You, or your Tutor on your behalf, may make a complaint about the conduct of an examination for any of the qualifications covered by this Code under the regulations for the Review of the Results of Examinations for Postgraduate Qualifications, provided that:

- (i) your representations are received within three months of the date on which the outcome of the examination was formally communicated to you;
- (ii) your complaint is demonstrated to fall within at least one of the following criteria:
  - a) that there existed material circumstances relating directly to the examination (*excluding* circumstances relating to your course of research or course of study) of which the Examiners were not aware;
  - b) that procedural irregularities occurred in the conduct of the examination, which were of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt as to whether the Examiners would have reached the same conclusion had the irregularities not occurred;
  - c) that there is demonstrable evidence of prejudice, bias, or inadequate assessment in the examination process.

### **Problems and Complaints**

82. Most problems or complaints can be resolved quickly and efficiently with the support, involvement or intervention of University staff or, sometimes, your College Tutor. You may also seek independent advice from the Student Advice Service. You are expected to exhaust all avenues of local, early informal resolution before initiating any formal complaint, review or appeal processes. In the first instance, you should consult and seek the advice of the appropriate departmental member of staff. If you are unclear who this is, you should consult the Director of Graduate Education in your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution). Although your College Tutor might not be able to solve the problem directly, he or she might be able to intervene, or at least offer suitable advice about how to proceed or where to go for assistance or advice.

83. If, however, you have reason to think that a problem or issue has not been dealt with satisfactorily at the initial, local level – or if the problem is demonstrably of a more serious nature – then other, formal complaint procedures are available.

### ***Formal complaints procedures***

84. The University has a range of complaint procedures, designed to cover academic, non-academic and personal matters, and detailed information about these procedures are available on the web via the links given in the annex to this Code. Your College will have its own complaint procedure. A student who remains dissatisfied following completion of the University's internal formal review, appeal or complaint procedures may be able to apply for a review of their complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), providing that the complaint they take to the OIA is eligible under its Rules.

85. The principal complaint or review procedures affecting a Graduate Student are likely to be: the Student Complaints Procedure; the procedures for review of the Results of Examinations for Postgraduate Qualifications (see 80 above); and the Procedure for the review of decisions of the Board of Graduate Studies.

## Glossary

**Adviser** – the person appointed by your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution) to help and support you and your Supervisor

**Allowance** – if you do not perform well in an examination, and there are mitigating circumstances, you may be able to apply for an allowance. This may mean that you can continue with your study or be allowed to re-take part or all of the examination.

**Assessor** – someone appointed to examine the work you have submitted at the end of your first year and who will make a recommendation to the Degree Committee on whether you are allowed to continue with the course

**Board of Graduate Studies** – the formal body in the University which is responsible for research degrees covered by this Code

**CGSRS** – Cambridge Graduate Student Reporting System on CamSIS which supervisors are required to use to report on your progress. You can view your reports and comment on them through the system. Reports can also be viewed by your Director of Graduate Education, your Degree Committee and your College.

**Degree Committee** – the Committee in your Faculty which has responsibility for your course and examination

**Director of Graduate Education** – the person in your Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution) who is responsible for oversight of its research students and courses

**Examiner** – someone appointed by the Degree Committee to examine your dissertation and conduct an oral examination (or viva) and make a recommendation to the Degree Committee on whether you be awarded the degree

**External Examiner** – an Examiner who is not from the University

**Examination allowance** – see Allowance

**Faculty** – the body responsible for organising teaching and research in individual subjects or groups of subjects. Their work is normally organised into sub-divisions called Departments.

**General Board** – the central body which advises the University on educational policy and resources. It is responsible for maintaining a high standard of teaching and research.

**Graduate Student** – see Register of Graduate Students

**Graduate Tutor** – see Tutor

**Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution)** - your Department, Faculty or University Partner Faculty/Department (or University Partner Institution)

**Intermission** – temporary authorised absence from your course for ill health or other non-medical reasons

**Internal Examiner** – an Examiner who is from the University (see Examiner)

**Leave to work away** – the permission you will need to seek from the Board of Graduate Studies if you want to study outside Cambridge during your course

**Principal Supervisor** – see Supervisor

**Register of Graduate Students** – the list maintained by the Board of Graduate Studies of all students studying for a research degree. Being on the Register means that you are a student.

**Second Supervisor** – if your research is interdisciplinary you may be appointed a Second Supervisor to ensure that the breadth of your research can be supervised

**Statutes and Ordinances** – the University's regulations

**Supervisor** – the person appointed by the Degree Committee to be responsible for your study

**Supervisory Team** – your Supervisor and Adviser. Your Supervisory Team may also include a Second Supervisor and others such as Assessors

**Tutor** – the person your College has appointed to provide general advice and guidance to you. This person may also be called the Graduate Tutor.

For further information see the University website "Information for Current Students" at <http://www.cam.ac.uk/current-students>