Doctoral College
UNIVERSITY OF SURREY

MPhil, PhD and MD Handbook

Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences (FEPS) MPhil, PhD and MD Handbook

Academic year 2026-27

Contents

Welcome from the Faculty Associate Dean (Doctoral College) 1

Key Contacts 2

1. Annual Re-registration 12

1.1 Registration of returning PGRs 12

1.2 Registration periods 12

1.3 Student Records 13

2. Fees and Payments 14

2.1 Tuition fees 14

2.2 Maintenance/Stipend payments 14

2.3 Accommodation 15

2.4 Completing (Writing up) fees 15

2.5 Re-Submission fees 15

2.6 Printing 15

2.7 Funding Opportunities 16

3. The Doctoral College and Governance 17

3.1 The Doctoral College 17

3.2 Governance 17

4. Feeding back on your experience 20

4.1 Postgraduate Researcher Engagement forum 20

4.2 The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 20

4.3 Have your Say 20

5. Starting your research degree 21

5.1 Induction 21

5.2 Desk space and local facilities 22

6. Supervision 24

6.1 Supervisory arrangements 24

6.2 What are your responsibilities as a PGR? 24

6.3 Regular meetings 24

6.4 Annual leave 28

6.5 Supervisor meeting FAQs 28

6.6 Fieldwork and Overseas Travel 29

7. Research Integrity and Ethics 31

7.1 Avoiding common pitfalls 34
7.1.1 Plagiarism 34
7.1.2 Copyright infringement 35
7.1.3 Data Storage 35
7.1.4 Health and Safety 36
7.1.5 Authorship of papers and other outputs 36
7.1.6 Considerations when choosing a journal for publication 37
7.1.7 Confidentiality and commercialisation 38
7.2 Research Ethics 38
8. Researcher Training and Development 40
8.1 Researcher Development Programme 40
8.2 Identifying your training needs 41
8.3 Writing development and support 42
8.4 Your Career Development – Employability & Engagement 43
8.5 Central Space for Postgraduate Research Students 45
8.6 Discipline-specific training 45
8.7 The PGR Conference 47
8.8 Teaching opportunities 47
9. Progress Monitoring 49
9.1 Mid-year and Annual progress review 49
9.2 The second year (FT) and fourth year review (PT) 50
9.3 Outcomes of reviews and unsatisfactory academic progress 50
10. Confirmation of Registration 52
10.1 What is confirmation? 52
10.2 When does Confirmation occur? 53
10.3 Who will my Assessors be? 53
10.4 What do I need to do for the report? 53
10.5 Confirmation Outcome(s) 55
11. Extenuating Circumstances 57
12. Completing Status 58
13. Changes to registration 61
13.1 Temporary withdrawal and sick pay 62
13.2 Extension to registration 64
13.3 Other changes to registration 65

14. Thesis submission and the viva voce examination 66
14.1 Stage 1: Entry Form for Examination 66
14.2 Stage 2: Approval of nominated examiners 68
14.3 Stage 3: Thesis submission for examination 68
14.4 Stage 4: Viva voce examination 72
14.5 Stage 5: Decision 73
14.6 Stage 6: E-thesis deposit 75
14.7 Stage 7: Award 76
14.8 Stage 8: Graduation 77
15. Other sources of advice and support 77
15.1 The University Library 77
15.2 The Postgraduate Society 78
15.3 The Students' Union 79
15.4 Disability and Neuroinclusion 80
15.5 MySurrey Hive 80
15.6 Health and Wellbeing 81
16. Making an appeal or complaint 84
Appendix 1: Student Policies and Regulations 85
Appendix 2: Dual Degree programmes 85
Appendix 3: PGR Lifecycle Diagram 86

Welcome from the Faculty Associate Dean (Doctoral College)

The Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences (FEPS) is the largest Faculty in the University and it is home to about half of the doctoral researchers registered at the University. The Schools and research centres within the faculty undertake a vast range of research covering Chemistry, the various Engineering disciplines, Mathematics and Physics through to Computer Science. But within that broad base you will find other gems of knowledge. Most research pursued is rated as internationally excellent and many areas are world leading. Our faculty hosts major national facilities such as the Ion Beam Centre, the 5G/6G Innovation Centre, and the Environmental Flow Research Centre which are used by academics from other universities as well as industry.

The research undertaken in FEPS is highly relevant for industry but also for the wider society. The researchers tackle many of the challenges the global community is facing today, and research outcomes have contributed to new understanding and the generation of new knowledge in the Engineering and Physical Sciences. From research into clean water supply, to laser-based space-to-earth solar-energy transfer, and from breakthroughs in audio-visual technologies to technologies for the 6th generation of mobile communication, researchers in FEPS play leading roles.

In all of these areas, Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) are at the core of the activity. Your contributions to research help us realise the visions of both the Schools and the wider faculty. Our world class research produces new results that are published and, in some cases, patented and our standing comes from your work and those that came before you. We could not undertake research without you and the importance of our PGRs to the wider research aspirations of the University is well understood within the faculty.

The Faculty offers an excellent and stimulating study and research environment, with state-of-the-art facilities provided by continuous investment in buildings and infrastructure. It also provides, in addition to the training courses offered through the researcher development programme, subject specific technology training. Together with other top class facilities such as the Surrey Sports Park and the delights of Guildford and the surrounding countryside on the doorstep, you could not have chosen a better place to continue your education.

I wish you every success for your research, hope that you will have a great experience during your time here, and warmly welcome you to the faculty. It's a great place to study and grow as a researcher and I truly hope you enjoy your time with us.

Prof Michelle Collins
Associate Dean (Doctoral College), FEPS

Key Contacts

University Level contacts

Contact	Email address
Doctoral College enquiries (general queries and signposting)	doctoralcollege@surrey.ac.uk Your email will be redistributed to the correct team to respond to.
Researcher Development & Careers and Employability enquiries (*Researcher Development and Employability team)*	rdp@surrey.ac.uk
Open Research (support and training to become an open researcher and make your research accessible, e.g. copyright, research data management)	openresearch@surrey.ac.uk
Research University Ethics Applications (enquiries and support in submitting an application)	Ethics@surrey.ac.uk

Faculty Level contacts

Contact	Departments	Email address
Associate Dean (Doctoral College)	All FEPS	Prof Michelle Collins m.collins@surrey.ac.uk
Research Degrees Programme Management Team (Doctoral College) (questions relating to registration and programme milestones)	All FEPS	researchdegrees@surrey.ac.uk

Contact	Departments	Email address
Jackie Gallagher *(Research Degrees Programme Management Team, Doctoral College).* Senior Research Degrees Administrator	(Advanced Technology Institute for Physics and Electrical and Electronic Engineering), Civil and Environmental Engineering, Computer Science, Centre for Environment and Sustainability, Quantum Biology, Institute for Communication Systems, Mathematics and Physics).	j.gallagher@surrey.ac.uk
Sarah Crawford (*Research Degrees Programme Management Team, Doctoral College).* Research Degrees Administrative Officer	AI Institute, Chemical and Process Engineering, Chemistry, Centre for Vision Speech and Signal Processing, Mechanical Engineering Sciences and Surrey Space Centre	s.crawford@surrey.ac.uk
Faculty Training Officer *(Researcher Development and Employability team)*	All FEPS	Dr Rose Holyoak r.holyoak@surrey.ac.uk

Local Level (School/Department) contacts

FEPS PGR Directors

Name	Area	Email address
Prof Wei Zhang	Advanced Technology Institute (ATI) for EEE and Physics	wz0003@surrey.ac.uk
Dr Peter Roth	Chemistry & Chemical and Process Engineering Research (CPE)	p.roth@surrey.ac.uk

Name	Area	Email address
Dr Sotiris Moschoyiannis	Computer Science	s.moschoyiannis@surrey.ac.uk
Dr Tan Sui (& Dr Dan Bompa)	Civil & Environmental Engineering (CEE)	t.sui@surrey.ac.uk (d.bompa@surrey.ac.uk)
Dr James Suckling	Centre for Environmental Strategy (CES)	j.suckling@surrey.ac.uk
Dr Jean-Yves Guillemaut	Centre for Vision Speech and Signal Processing (CVSSP)	j.guillemaut@surrey.ac.uk
Prof Zhili Sun	Information and Communication Systems (ICS)	z.sun@surrey.ac.uk
Dr Tan Sui (& Dr Dan Bompa)	Mechanical Engineering Sciences (MES)	t.sui@surrey.ac.uk (d.bompa@surrey.ac.uk)
Prof Alessia Gualandris	Maths & Physics	a.gualandris@surrey.ac.uk
Prof Jonathan Johnston (Sch of Biosci & Med)	Quantum Biology	j.johnston@surrey.ac.uk
Dr Raffaella Guida	Surrey Space Centre (SSC)	r.guida@surrey.ac.uk

FEPS School Administration Managers (for School queries)

Name	School	Email address
Philip Morriss	School of Maths & Physics	P.Morriss@surrey.ac.uk
Megan Hopper	School of Chemistry & Chemical Engineering	m.hopper@surrey.ac.uk
Noelle Hartley	School of Engineering	SchoolofEngAdminHub@surrey.ac.uk
Jane Phillips	School of Computer Science and Electronic Engineering	jane.phillips@surrey.ac.uk

Other Contacts (CDT & PDS)

Prof Yi-Zhe Song (PGR Director)	AI Institute	y.song@surrey.ac.uk
Lucy Burnell Centre for Doctoral Training Co-Manager (Surrey)	CDT Fort future open, secure and resilient communications (FORT) centre for doctoral training (CDT)	l.bunnell@surrey.ac.uk
Carolina Lindberg Administrator	Pan University AI (CDT) Institute	c.lindberg@surrey.ac.uk
Dr Shervan Babamohammadi Project Officer	CDT in Aerosol Science	s.babamohammadi@surrey.ac.uk
Sarah Bowden PDS Development and Administration Officer	PDS programme	s.j.bowden@surrey.ac.uk

FEPS School Administrators (for Centre/Departmental queries)

Name	Centre	Email address
Natasha Clifton	Advanced Technology Institute for Physics and Electrical and Electronic Engineering (ATI)	n.clifton@surrey.ac.uk

Name	Centre	Email address
Linda Bennett	School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering.	SCCEadminteam@surrey.ac.uk
Jane Phillips	Computer Science	admin-cs-pgrs@surrey.ac.uk
Carolina Lindberg & Sophie Maxwell	Centre for Vision Speech and Signal Processing (CVSSP)	c.lindberg@surrey.ac.uk Sophie.maxwell@surrey.ac.uk
Malissa Vale	Institute for Communication Systems (ICS)	m.vale@surrey.ac.uk
Non Sharma & Fran Ward	School of Engineering Surrey Space Centre (SSC) Centre for Environment and Sustainability (CES))	SchoolofEngAdminHub@surrey.ac.uk
Elizabeth Jones	Maths and Physics	smp-office@surrey.ac.uk

Other Contacts

Name	Position	Email address
Dr Sian Berry	FEPS Health and Safety Officer	s.s.berry@surrey.ac.uk
PGR Course Reps	Please refer to Student Union link for details	Who is my Postgraduate Research Rep? - Surrey Students' Union Any queries please contact student union Contact Us - Surrey Students' Union
TBD	Chair of PGR Engagement Forum	

Student Representatives

Course Reps

A Course Representative (Course Rep) is an elected PGR who volunteers to gather feedback from their peers and voices it to the University. They provide a direct way for PGRs to communicate their diverse range of opinions to the staff who deliver their university experience. Any student can stand to be the Course Rep for their research area, and all PGRs will be represented by at least one Course Rep. The Students' Union will run training for Course Reps and provide support, reward, and recognition.

WHAT DO COURSE REPS DO?

1. Research student opinion – Reps will encourage their fellow PGRs to engage in discussions about their academic and social university experiences, and promote the opportunity to share feedback, ideas, and questions to the University through the Course Rep scheme and the wider Students' Union, whether the feedback is positive or about something that needs changing.
2. Represent students – Reps attend Faculty-level meetings held by the University to give voice to more complex issues requiring collective discussion with staff, along with working closely with Doctoral College staff to achieve positive changes for PGRs.
3. Report back – Finally, Reps will let PGRs know what has happened because of their feedback! This will help the PGR community see the value in sharing their opinions with their Rep to the University.

WHY ARE REPS IMPORTANT?

Representation is a core part of the Students' Union. The collaboration between Course Reps, the Union, and University staff leads to big changes both in individual research areas and across the University as a whole. It's also vital that students take the lead in their academic experiences and shape the University now and for the future. Reps are a core part of the student feedback structure at the University, and student-led representation is at the heart of the Students' Union and Doctoral College.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FOR REPS?

Being a Course Rep is a fantastic way to boost your **employability**, assertiveness, and communication skills. Having a leadership role with formal committee experience on your CV when you leave university is going to help you stand out from the crowd and help you to develop qualities you'll need when you leave Surrey or progress further into academia. You will gain practice you'll have in public speaking and negotiation from attending Faculty-level meetings and representing your cohort. As a Course Rep, you'll also receive:

- Chances to win awards, including Rep of The Month
- Resources, freebies, and training
- Improve your employability

- Logging volunteer hours
- Access to other opportunities, e.g. workshops and focus groups

HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

Become a PGR Rep! Elections take place each year following the Sep/Oct induction, and when elections take place, you will be asked to complete a nomination form. Once you have submitted your nomination form, your nomination will be processed, and if needed, a vote will be arranged for the PGRs you'd represent to decide on who is elected to be the Course Rep. You will then be notified that you have been elected, and you will be registered with us here at the Students' Union to contact you to complete Course Rep Training!

The time commitment to be a Rep isn't as much as you might think. Many Reps easily balance their responsibilities alongside their research and other voluntary roles. You'll need to ensure you have the time to attend your faculty-level meetings – these are the core responsibility to the role. You can expect to attend six – eight meetings per year. The rest of your role will be less time-demanding – chatting to your peers to gather and escalate student feedback, and to update them on the results of your meetings.

Information on how to become a Course Representative can be found on the 'Become a Postgraduate Research Rep' page.

If becoming a Rep isn't for you, please still stay involved by chatting to your Rep, sharing your feedback with them, and get in touch with the Students' Union if you have any further questions.

Find out more from the Student's Union website via www.ussu.co.uk. This is updated following the PGR Rep elections which happen each October - November.

Key Sources of Information

PGRs (Postgraduate Researchers) should familiarise themselves with the following key resources:

- **Doctoral College PGR Information Centre**

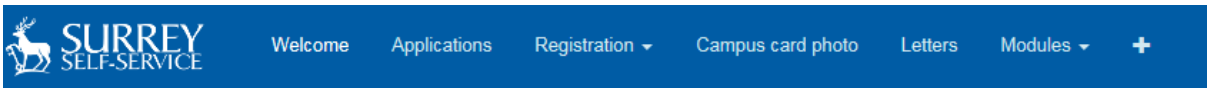
The DC SharePoint site is your central hub for essential information and resources tailored for PGRs, Supervisors, Examiners, and Staff. It provides details on:

  - studentships and funding opportunities
  - information on professional development
  - guidance on registration changes.

In addition, you'll find a comprehensive collection of guidance documents, essential forms, and other key resources, all in one convenient location."

Doctoral College PGR Information Centre - Home

- **Surrey Self-Service**



Surrey Self-Service provides PGRs with their programme details, including completed milestones. It is also where PGRs:

- log monthly supervision meetings
- request any changes to registration
- book training & development workshops offered by the Doctoral College

Log into Surrey Self-Service via the MySurrey Research hub. Once you are logged into Surrey Self-Service, click on **Research programme details**



Look out for the plus symbol on the main banner as the link may be in the drop-down menu.

Full-time PGRs can produce council tax exemption letters through Surrey Support under the **Letters** tab. Please note that part-time PGRs are NOT eligible for council tax exemption.

PGRs can also download the following letters from their surrey self service record.

- Confirmation of Registration
- Confirmation of address

- Student information for Employment purposes

Bespoke letters

The research degrees programme management team can provide bespoke letters relating to your academic status based on when your request is submitted. These letters are not automatically generated from the student system and therefore we will aim to provide you with a letter within a reasonable timeframe of between 3 – 7 working days, depending on busy periods and other priorities, it can be sooner. Please ensure you plan for any letter requests.
For PostDoc positions this may require your official award certificate. The letter the research degrees programmes management (RDPM) provide may not satisfy that application route.
For PGRs considering applying for the Graduate Route then a letter issued by the RDPM confirming your academic status will **not** satisfy the application for the Graduate Route
Please refer to the information on the website Working after studies | MySurrey student website | University of Surrey and if you have any further detailed queries relating to this, then please make an appointment with International Student Advice team via Surrey Support.

Please consider the above when discussing with your supervisor your thesis submission to viva planning.
Please do ensure you are fully aware of any application procedures and criteria.

Request for Sponsor Permission Letter -Student visa extension.

International Student Advice (ISA) team via Surrey Support will provide the non-objection letters for a student who is extending their student visa.

Requests for finance letters

Requests for official proof of funding to verify your studentship award then please contact PGR Studentships (finance), studentships@surrey.ac.uk . The RDPM do not hold student financial records.

- **University of Surrey | MySurrey**

The Research area of MySurrey website has links to:

- The Regulations for Research Degrees
- The Code of Practice for Research Degrees
- Guidance documents under the Useful Documents tab to help you complete your monthly supervisory meetings, request changes to registration and sign-up to workshops
- Important information for PGRs studying on a student visa

MySurrey Support pages also provide information on Wellbeing, financial advice under the Money section.

- **SurreyLearn**

SurreyLearn is the University's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). The Doctoral College Common Room links through to each Faculty's own area for PGRs where you will find School/Departmental guidance on the Confirmation Report. The assignment area of SurreyLearn is used by some Faculties for the purpose of uploading the confirmation report and an electronic copy of the soft-bound thesis.

Please also refer to this link https://research.surrey.ac.uk/useful-documents to access information and guidance pertaining to **Confirmation documents**

You are not required to submit your thesis to SurreyLearn. **Please refer to Section 14.3 Stage 3:** Thesis submission for examination.

Please refer to the DC SurreyLearn page via **here:**
https://surreylearn.surrey.ac.uk/d2l/home/147276

- **University Email (@surrey.ac.uk)**

Your University email address is the primary method of communication. PGRs MUST ensure they check this account on a regular basis. Final year PGRs should note that this email account is closed 90 days following the award of the degree.

1. Annual Re-registration

1.1 Registration of returning PGRs

Each year, all PGRs enrolled with the University for an award, including those **on temporary withdrawal**, are required to formally re-register on their doctoral programme.

This formal enrolment process ensures that you are entitled to access University facilities, laboratories, and other academic related sessions; and are liable for payment of tuition fees where appropriate. You must re-register even if you have submitted your thesis for examination as you are considered enrolled until you have been officially awarded.

Over the summer, you'll receive an email to your University email account inviting you to re-register at www.surrey.ac.uk/selfservice. In a few clicks you can confirm and, if necessary, amend your details. Once completed, you will be instantly re-registered for the new academic year. **Please complete re-registration by 20th September,** particularly if you are a funded student as Finance need time to set up the October stipend payments. You will be contacted if you fail to re-register by the deadline, but ultimately if you don't re-register it will result in the termination of your studies.

Further details regarding re-registering and advice for returners, can be found here:
Returners re-registering | MySurrey Help | University of Surrey

1.2 Registration periods

It is a University requirement that all research projects can feasibly be completed within a specified timeframe. This not only ensures that your work remains current and does not lose any of its novelty, but it also means that you can move on to the next stage of your career in a timely manner. **The University expects a full-time PGR to submit their thesis for examination within 36 months, or within the funded-period, and a part-time PGR to submit within 72 months.**

We allow a maximum registration period of 48 months (full-time) and 96 months (part-time) to allow for any unforeseen circumstances that may arise and delay submission.

The maximum periods of registration are given in the table below.

Type of degree	Maximum period of registration (Full-time)	Maximum period of registration (Part-time)
MPhil	36 months	72 months
PhD	48 months	96 months
MD	36 months	72 months

Maximum registration deadlines are monitored by the Admission, Progression and Examination Subcommittee (APESC) and if PGRs fail to submit by their maximum registration deadline, it is likely that their registration with the University will be terminated. In exceptional circumstances an extension to registration may be granted, **but this is by no means guaranteed.**

Your registration **start date** and **end date** are as recorded against your surrey self service record.

1.3 Student Records

Details about all students are held on the University's SITS database, which feeds through to the information you see on Surrey Self Service (SSS). All data is stored and used in accordance with the University's student privacy notice student privacy notice and in line with the relevant UK legislation.

2. Fees and Payments

2.1 Tuition fees

Information on current PGR tuition fees can be found on the individual programme pages on the Surrey website. Should you require information on fees from earlier years contact fees and funding via **Surrey Support.** Please find information here on the timing of tuition fee payments for postgraduate researchers.

If any tuition fees are outstanding at the end of your programme, the University will be unable to confer your award until the debt has been cleared.

2.2 Maintenance/Stipend payments

If you are in receipt of a University of Surrey or Research Council studentship which pays a maintenance grant/stipend, you will receive your monthly payment at the start of each month. In your first month at the University, the payment will be made by the end of the month following the final day for registration, if your bank details have been received and you are fully registered.

Usually once you submit your thesis you will no longer be in receipt of further maintenance payments.

Studentship queries for PGRs awarded a Doctoral College Studentship Award (DCSA), **CSC scholarship awards** and **AHRC** and **ESRC** funded can be addressed to the Postgraduate Research Lifecycle Systems Manager at doctoralcollege@surrey.ac.uk.

Studentship queries for PGRs who are EPSRC funded should be directed to the FEPS Faculty Studentship & Administration Manager joanna.moore@surrey.ac.uk

For other PGRs in receipt of maintenance paid direct from the University of Surrey, queries can be addressed to the PGRs Studentship Finance team at studentships@surrey.ac.uk

For queries relating to Research Training Support Grant (RTSG)

Please contact your supervisor in the first instance.

Please refer to the RTSG page on the Doctoral College SharePoint for useful information.

Studentship RTSG and Consumables Guidance

2.3 Accommodation

If you are based in University of Surrey owned accommodation and have a query regarding your invoice for accommodation fees, please contact Surrey Support using the following link https://support.surrey.ac.uk/support/create-case/

2.4 Completing (Writing up) fees

PGRs who make a request to transfer to the Completing Status fee towards the end of their programme will be invoiced in full or proportionally, according to the expected end date available when raising the invoice. Completing fees are payable per academic year with provision for partial refund as appropriate and will be reviewed at the point the thesis submission date is entered on Surrey Self-Service. The thesis submission date is the date when the electronic thesis is submitted to the Faculty Research Degrees Team.

The Student Receivables team may agree a payment plan up to your submission date. They can be reached at student-receivables@surrey.ac.uk.

2.5 Re-Submission fees

If, after your *viva voce*, you are required to re-submit your thesis for examination, you will be asked to pay a re-submission fee, please check the webpage for the latest resubmission fee information, https://www.surrey.ac.uk/fees-and-funding/tuition-fees/additional-costs

Payment should be made via the Surrey Online Store before your resubmission deadline: https://store.surrey.ac.uk/product-catalogue/registry-student-services/resubmission-fees .

PGRs who wish to extend their student visa to cover a resubmission period will need to re-register before applying to extend their visa. Student Records will supply a copy of the late registration form in these cases. No tuition fee will be charged during the resubmission period. Where examiners have requested further research as part of the resubmission, the PGR's faculty may require payment of a bench fee to cover the costs of equipment/resources.

2.6 Printing

PGRs should not pay for printing when using departmental photocopiers. In the unlikely event you are charged, please contact IT via Surrey Support.

2.7 Funding Opportunities

There are very few funding opportunities once a PGR is registered because there is an expectation that finances will be in place from the start of the programme however, there are some external opportunities available for enrolled PGRs. Details can be found here: https://www.surrey.ac.uk/doctoral-college/prospective-postgraduate-researchers/fees-funding.

The Doctoral College also pays a subscription to the **Alternative Funding Guide**, further details which can be found on Surrey Learn https://surreylearn.surrey.ac.uk/d2l/le/content/147276/viewContent/2428570/View.
Please always carefully read the information to see if you are eligible to apply.

3. The Doctoral College and Governance

3.1 The Doctoral College

The Doctoral College forms an integral part of the Pro Vice Chancellor Research and Innovation's portfolio and the University's Research Strategy. Its role is to help Postgraduate Researchers (PGRs) get the most from their time at Surrey through developing new and novel ways to build a cohesive community and research environment, providing training and development opportunities, facilitating excellent supervision, and enhancing employability skills.

The Doctoral College oversees the management of the PGR lifecycle through the Research Degrees Programme Management Team and the activities of the Researcher Development and Employability (RDE) team, which provides research and transferable skills training as well as careers and employability support.

Developing talented researchers capable of dealing with the world's future challenges and opportunities is one of the most important, and rewarding, activities we do at the University - the Doctoral College is at the heart of this.

The Associate Deans (Doctoral College) (ADs) and PGR Directors (PGRDs) lead on and support the activities of the Doctoral College at the Faculty and local (Department, School, Centre) levels. They provide hands-on management of doctoral programmes to ensure that you are well-supported and have access to the training and guidance you need to successfully complete your doctorate and prepare for your career path of choice.

3.2 Governance

There are two University-level committees with a responsibility for PGRs:

Doctoral College Board (DCB): This committee takes overall responsibility for considering and formulating University policy and strategy relating to PGRs. Student representation comes via the elected VP Voice of the Students' Union (vpvoice@surrey.ac.uk) and the Head PGR rep.

Admission, Progression and Examination Subcommittee **(APESC)**: This subcommittee meets monthly and is responsible to the Doctoral College Board for monitoring individual PGR progress.

The outcomes of your progress reviews, and any requests for changes to registration, are considered by this subcommittee. Due to individual PGR matters being discussed, it is not appropriate to have PGR representation on this subcommittee. The calendar of meetings for 2026-27 is as follows:

APESC Calendar (2026/27)

Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
14/10/26	11/11/26	9/12/26	13/01/27	10/02/27	10/03/27
(30/9/26)	(28/10/26)	(25/11/26)	(30/12/26) *	(27/01/27)	(24/02/27)

Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
14/04/27	12/05/27	9/06/27	14/07/27	No meeting	8/09/27
(31/03/27)	(28/04/27)	(26/05/27)	(30/06/27)		(25/08/27)

*Due to university closure realistically sign off would need to be by 24/12/26

The date in brackets is the date by which your supervisor **and** postgraduate research director must have approved the request for it to be considered at that month's APESC.

At the Faculty-level, the Faculty Research Degrees Committee (FRDC) has a responsibility for postgraduate research matters. This committee is responsible, within the context of the University policy and strategy, for considering and formulating a strategy for the Faculty relating to the development, evaluation and enhancement of research degree provision. There is a PGR representative from each Faculty on this subcommittee. The current PGR representative from the Faculty can be found in the Key Contacts section of this handbook.

There is no August APESC so only urgent/exceptional requests will be considered by Chairs action during that month.

All deadlines for APESC meetings are as described in the APESC calendar. So please ensure your request is submitted in a timely manner to be scheduled to July APESC, unless your application can wait until September APESC.

Online APESC requests are viewed by the RDPM periodically and are processed accordingly within the set deadlines. Once approved by APESC and following APESC procedures you will receive an email from student records regarding that change of registration.

You can view the action/status with of your request at any time and can also view any audit notes via your surrey self-service record.

4. Feeding back on your experience

4.1 Postgraduate Researcher Engagement forum

In addition to the committees mentioned above, you also have access to a Postgraduate Researcher Engagement (PEF) forum. The purpose of the forum is to discuss with PGR feedback on their learning experience. This enables the Faculty and, where appropriate, the University to make changes to better support you in your research degree. You are very much encouraged to use these meetings, or your local PGR representative, to voice any issues or concerns you may have. The outcomes of discussions at these fora are reported to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee.

4.2 The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey

The Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) is the national survey of PGRs in the UK, which gives PGRs the opportunity to share their experiences of doing a research degree. It usually runs in the Spring.

As the UK's primary national survey of PGRs, it is the only way for the University to benchmark how we are doing against other universities. The survey has led to changes and improvements in the PGR experience at Surrey, so it is important that you make your voice heard. Each School creates an action plan to help us respond to the feedback from this survey, and these are shared with you. The Doctoral College will also coordinate a central review of feedback from the PRES together with other routes for feedback, including those set out below) from the PGR community to help make improvements to PGR support at the University level.

4.3 Have your Say

In addition to the PGR Engagements forums and the PRES, there are other routes available for you to give feedback to the University. For example, the Students Union runs regular events, such as Speak Week, to survey the opinions of all students including PGRs. You can also always bring your ideas to your PGR Director and the Doctoral College. These are all great ways of ensuring the right people hear your views.

5. Starting your research degree

5.1 Induction

All PGRs, regardless of start date, receive a comprehensive induction to their degree programme. The induction programme is comprised of centrally organised events, to give you an opportunity to meet the staff of the Doctoral College as well as staff from support services such as the Centre for Wellbeing, Library, Careers and Employability and the Students' Union.

The central events are complemented by local inductions, which take place at the Faculty and School/Departmental level. These induction programmes are designed to familiarise you with your local working environment, as well as provide an opportunity to meet local staff (academic and administrative), other PGRs and researchers, and receive an induction on local resources. You should be given information on any compulsory health and safety requirements and should be familiarised with local policies in your area, particularly if you are working in a laboratory setting. Supervisors are ultimately responsible for the safe working of any PGRs whom they take on. Early in the project you should be made aware of the ethical and legal framework within which your project is undertaken.

Induction Checklist

Level	Contact	Induction item
Central	Doctoral College Team	Broad overview of the University Interactive discussion on doing a doctorate at Surrey Library services for PGR Researcher Development and Employability Academic writing support Career & employability support Teacher training - PG Cert in Learning & Teaching Promoting research Postgraduate Society Student support Centre for wellbeing Regulations and Codes of practice

Level	Contact	Induction item
Faculty	Associate Dean (Doctoral College) Incl. Faculty Research Degrees Team	Programme structure (reviews, confirmation, examination) Health and safety policies Student-supervisor relationship Intellectual Property Faculty Handbooks
Departmental/ School	PGR Director	Introduction to key staff Research groups and expertise Local training provision and training requirements Applying to demonstrate/teach Desk space and use Local resources (e.g. toilets, coffee, photocopying/printing etc., equipment)
First supervision	Principal supervisor	Discuss practicalities of supervisory meetings Discuss responsibilities for recording meetings Discuss responsibilities of each team member and PGR Discuss feedback Flag any potential ethical issues Discuss authorship of publications Discuss any training needs Set clear targets, including training, for the first six months

5.2 Desk space and local facilities

Currently all full-time PGRs in the Faculty should be given access to a desktop PC or laptop and desk space should be available (although in some cases this may be shared). Your supervisor (or local administrator) should be able to show you where this is and to help you find all the facilities you need to carry out your research. **Please liaise with your School regarding IT equipment**. They should also explain the local arrangements for photocopying, expenses and travel.

If your research is laboratory-based, then as well as complying with all relevant health and safety and ethical requirements you will need to become familiar with any local rules and procedures. Your supervisor should make these clear to you before you start.

You should also speak to your local administrator and PGR director who in addition to your supervisory team will be able to provide advice and further guidance on the topics below:

- Desk space
- Access to computing resources
- Practical advice on accessing labs/specialist equipment
- Photocopying
- Expenses – including arrangements for booking travel and accommodation
- Funds for conference attendance and other external activities (which are covered by Funding within your **Research Training Support Grant** if your funding package includes one).

PGR expenses are managed at local level the Research Degrees Programme Management team are not involved in this process.

Please check with your school about funding for attending a conference. Unfortunately, **we do not have central funds available** unless your department/centre provides local support or this expense is covered as part of your studentship award.

6. Supervision

6.1 Supervisory arrangements

All PGRs should expect to be supervised by a team comprised of one Principal Supervisor and at least one Co-supervisor. PGRs who are working under a collaborative agreement with another organisation will be allocated a collaborative supervisor from that organisation. The appointment of a team of supervisors ensures that there is adequate experience of supervising PGRs within the team and that less experienced supervisors have access to a mentor. The University also provides training to new supervisors to ensure that they are equipped with the appropriate skills and knowledge to guide you through your research journey.

It is likely that you will have had some contact with your Principal Supervisor during the application process, either through working up a research proposal or during an interview. The relationship with your Principal Supervisor is of paramount importance in determining whether the research process will be fruitful and enjoyable. As such, you will find it helpful to attend the Growing and Maintaining your Supervisory Relationships workshop.

The sections that follow outline what you can expect from your supervisors and what is expected from you. There are also some practical tips on what you can do to help ensure that the relationship works well.

6.2 What are your responsibilities as a PGR?

The Research area of MySurrey website links to the Code of Practice for Research Degrees which sets out your responsibilities as a Surrey PGR as well as the support you can expect to receive from your supervisory team. Please ensure you take the time to read through this Code.

6.3 Regular meetings

The Code of Practice stipulates that regular meetings must take place between PGRs and their Principal Supervisor; other members of the supervisory team should attend these meetings as appropriate. You should meet with your supervisor at least once a month and keep in regular contact during periods of fieldwork. This is the prescribed minimum number of meetings, and a **requirement** for PGRs studying on a **student visa**, but more frequent meetings are encouraged.

All supervisory meetings must be logged in Surrey Self-Service. There is a 'How to' guidance document under the Useful Documents webpage in MySurrey which will help you to navigate the supervision meeting system.

Monthly supervision logs are created on the 5th of each month, and you will be sent an automatic email to alert you that a new log is available. You have until the middle of the following month (usually the 15th/16th) to log your meeting notes. If you miss the deadline, and are not studying on a student visa, you should add your notes to the next available meeting log. **If you are studying on a student visa**, you must inform **Immigration Compliance** via **Surrey Support** if you fail to record your meeting notes as they monitor engagement through the monthly meeting records. Immigration Compliance will re-open the missing log so notes can be submitted, however it is the responsibility of students to ensure they submit the logs on time. After you have submitted the log, the supervisor you selected as having had the meeting with will be sent a notification to check and approve the record (your other supervisors will not be able to approve the record). Always keep notes of the meetings with your supervisors and agree targets to be met before the next session. Once you have finished a meeting, submit the monthly log. You do not have to use the system template to record the discussion and targets, you will have the option to upload a document if you prefer.

To ensure the smooth running of your regular supervisory meetings, you should discuss the following with your supervisor at the earliest opportunity: -

- The frequency and timing of supervision meetings
- Preferred level of supervision - very hands-on or hands-off
- Resource needs - what is essential, what is available, what can reasonably be expected
- Research ethics
- Intellectual property arrangements
- Your time commitments

You may find the following guidance helpful in thinking about how to approach supervisory sessions:

Be independent: This is your project, and your supervisors will expect you to take the lead. Remember that your supervisors are there to guide you but they will not have the answer to the particular problem you are researching – it's your job to find it!

Meeting etiquette:

- Always make sure you arrive on time for supervisory sessions and make sure that you have completed any actions required of you.
- Be open and honest with your supervisors.
- If you are experiencing a problem, talk to your supervisors about it early on. Problems become much harder to deal with if you leave them too long!
- Before the end of a supervisory session, make sure you agree to a date for the next meeting and stick to it.

Have reasonable expectations: Remember that supervisors are busy people with other commitments competing for their time. Your supervisors may not be able to meet with you at short notice so make sure you give them enough time to prepare if you need to meet with them outside of the agreed series of meetings.

Write: The sooner you start writing, the easier you will find it to clarify your ideas and progress your research project. It is useful to provide supervisors with samples of written work before your meetings as this enables your supervisors to see how you have organised your thoughts and to offer constructive feedback and guidance.

What to do if something is going wrong with your supervision

Despite PGRs and supervisors having the best intentions, issues and tensions can arise in a supervisory relationship. These issues can range from concerns about a change in supervision or their (*temporary*) lack of availability to, very occasionally, a breakdown of the supervisory relationship, despite the measures and safeguards the University has put in place to prevent it. If you have any concerns about your supervisory arrangement, the following steps can be taken to address the problem.

It is recognised that raising an issue about your supervision can be very difficult. To help you identify and understand any problems, and to get an impartial viewpoint to help you decide the best course of action, you can seek confidential advice, ***at any stage***, from the Research Degrees Programme Management Team or staff in the Doctoral College.

- As a first step, you are encouraged to discuss your concerns informally with the supervisor with whom the problem is occurring. It often helps if you articulate your needs and the support you require explicitly to your supervisor if you haven't already done so. Remember that you can seek support and help in doing this from other members of the supervisory team.

- If this does not bring about the desired improvements, or if such a conversation proves difficult to take place, you can arrange to meet with the PGRD for your School, Department or Research Centre* to discuss the problem and how to address it.

- If the problem persists, you can bring it to the attention of the Associate Dean (Doctoral College) for your Faculty, who will talk you through the options available to you, including changes to the supervisory team. However, you should bear in mind factors such as the availability of members of staff with appropriate expertise, and funding arrangements may mean that it is not always possible to alter supervisory arrangements.

  * If your supervisor has one of these roles, you can contact someone in a similar role in the School, Department, Research Centre, Faculty, or the Research Degrees Programme Management Team for advice.

The Students' Union also offers advice and guidance to students with concerns or complaints. If you wish to seek support from the Students' Union, please contact ussu.advice@surrey.ac.uk.

If raising problems through these channels does not bring about a satisfactory resolution, you are entitled to make a formal complaint to the University. Guidance on complaints about Learning Opportunities is provided in the University's regulations and the OSCAR webpages. See also **section 16 of this handbook**.

6.4 Annual leave

PGRs have an allocation of 25 days holiday per year, this does not include public holidays or university closure days, and is prorated for part-time PGRs. Annual leave runs from 1 August – 31 July and **should be arranged and recorded between you and your supervisors.** Annual leave is different to temporarily withdrawing from your programme and should not be requested as a temporary withdrawal.

PGRs do not have term times as described via here: https://www.surrey.ac.uk/about/facts/key-dates - **Semester dates -** Semester date exceptions.

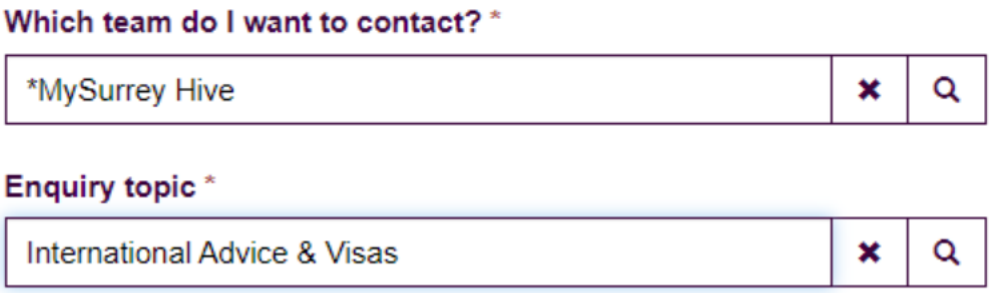
6.5 Supervisor meeting FAQs

You are required to log monthly supervisory meetings through Surrey Self-Service. You will be sent an email at the start of each month (5th) to log your supervision for that month. This must be logged by the 15th of the following month.

Please follow the link for further guidance and FAQs Your supervisor | MySurrey student website | University of Surrey

For PGRs on a visa.

If you forget to submit your supervisor logs by the deadline and therefore need that event log re-opening **you must** submit a query using Surrey Support using the categories in the snippet below, and it will then be allocated over to Immigration Compliance to progress with.



It is a requirement for a student to continue to meet immigration and compliance engagement processes for the full period that they hold a visa and remain enrolled.

It only requires **one supervisor to sign off your request** so whoever you refer it to will be required to sign your supervisor log off.

Please do check the FAQs Your supervisor | MySurrey student website | University of Surrey

6.6 UK and International Fieldwork, Placements and Internships

All PGRs undertaking an **international placement** or **international fieldwork** must register with the **International Engagement Office** on their portal MoveOn. This includes unfunded placements and placements being undertaken in a PGR's home country.

- In the event of an incident in a particular location, Surrey will draw data from MoveOn to contact and provide support to PGRs in that location.
- Surrey has a legal obligation to report international placements to HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency).

Please see Postgraduate Researcher International Placements & Fieldwork, this page details the steps you need to take to register a **placement** or **fieldwork,** and has a link to the PGR MoveOn portal. You will also find links to the template forms you need to complete, including the PGR Risk Assessment for Travel Abroad and for placements, the Learning Agreement.

Please review the PGR Risk Assessment for Travel Abroad to ensure you leave adequate time for your form to be signed.

- If aspects of the placement are high risk, the risk assessment will need to be reviewed by the Faculty Health and Safety team and signed by your School's Associate Head External Engagement.
- If your placement is in a sensitive jurisdiction, or the headquarters of the host institution is in a sensitive jurisdiction, you will need to complete additional information and send to the Faculty Associate Director International for review and signature.
- Please send a copy of your fully signed Risk Assessment for Travel Abroad to researchdegrees@surrey.ac.uk.

Do not make any financial commitments or travel **until you have received a confirmation** of registration email from the International Engagement Office.

In addition to the above, **Postgraduate researchers (PGR)** on a **student visa** wishing to undertake a work **placement, internship** or **fieldwork** must also complete the following steps **before commencing the activity.**

1. If you are undertaking a placement then you must provide the **placement form** and supporting statement (if your placement is integral to your thesis), by email to researchdegrees@surrey.ac.uk

2. If you are carrying out fieldwork then you must provide the **fieldwork form** by email to researchdegrees@surrey.ac.uk

3 Then upload the relevant document(s) to Immigration Compliance team via Surrey Support. Go to 'Ask a question' and then select the following (as below) when the form comes up.

The relevant forms can be found here Useful Documents webpage in MySurrey, under International postgraduate research students.

Once Immigration Compliance has confirmed your placement or fieldwork request (*not just a receipt acknowledging your request*), then please send a screen shot (evidence) to researchdegrees@surrey.ac.uk

Please be aware that **Immigration Compliance** require student visa holders to send them the **placement/internship/fieldwork** form, this is for all placements and periods of research away from the University, **even if in the UK.**



If your original approved dates change then you must complete another form with your revised dates and **complete the above stages.**

Regular engagement, for example via Teams, should continue at least on a monthly basis during periods of fieldwork and these engagements must continue to be recorded on Surrey Self-Service.

You should contact your supervisors, Department/School Office *(if applicable)* and the Research Degrees Programme Management Team once you have arrived back in the UK. Additionally, PGRs studying on a visa should send the Immigration Compliance Team confirmation of their return flight within 24 hours of landing in the UK, as the University will need to record the date of arrival in the UK.

Internships not integral to the thesis, which will not directly contribute to the research for your PhD project, which is not directly contributing to the submission of your thesis then you should

apply for a period of temporary withdrawal (TWD). TWD is fine for a project that helps students employability but does not result in work that contributes to their PhD thesis.

If the placement **will contribute to the progress of your thesis** then you may not need to take a temporary withdrawal. *If progress on your thesis will be halted during the placement then it may be best for you to request a temporary withdrawal to cover the length of the placement to ensure that your registration end date is extended.

Information with regard to undertaking a work placement/internship whilst on a **student visa** can be found here: https://my.surrey.ac.uk/research/useful-documents - Please refer to the section: **International postgraduate research students**

Where applicable, you may also want to check with your CDT (centre) admin support in case of any specific requirements or conditions that the Research Degrees Programme Management team are not aware of.

7. Research Integrity and Ethics

The University of Surrey is committed to ensuring that all research conducted under its auspices meets the highest standards of research practice. As a UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) recognized research organization, we require all research funded by UKRI to adhere to their policies and processes relating to research integrity. As signatories to the Universities UK (UUK) Concordat to Support Research Integrity, the University of Surrey is committed to:

- Maintaining the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research.
- Ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate legal, professional, and ethical frameworks and standards.
- Creating a research environment grounded in a culture of integrity, supported by good governance, best practices, and development opportunities for researchers.
- Implementing robust, transparent, and fair processes to address allegations of research misconduct should they arise.
- Continually working to strengthen research integrity, with regular and open reviews of progress.

It is expected that all research conducted at or in the name of the University is carried out with the highest levels of integrity and ethical responsibility. Any departures from appropriate behavior and practices may result in allegations of potential breaches of research practice which will be investigated under the University's Code of Practice for handling such allegations. Contact integrity@surrey.ac.uk for support.

Assurance Team Support

The Assurance Team is the central point of contact for all enquiries related to potential breaches of research practice, ethics, and governance at the University of Surrey. The team also supports researchers working with human and animal participants, those needing external approval (including from NHS and HRA), and those whose studies require ethical review (University Ethics Committee).

A member of the Assurance Team acts as the sponsor representative for NHS and Health Research Authority applications on behalf of the University **assurance@surrey.ac.uk**

The Ethics Review Process and Resources

The University of Surrey considers research at all levels should be conducted in a professional manner, and in line with our institutional and regulatory policies and guidance.

Before starting any research that involves the collection of new data, you need to obtain a favorable ethical opinion from the ethics review process. Collecting data or starting research without having previously undertaken the ethics review process may be considered as potential breaches of research practice and/or research misconduct.

If you have any questions relating to this process and what is expected of you as a researcher, please contact your supervisor in the first instance to discuss your research plans. You can also email ethics@surrey.ac.uk for more information.

Please be aware that the ethical approval process can take time, particularly if external organizations are involved. It is crucial to consider and apply for ethical approval as early as possible in your research planning. If you have concerns relating to the timing of your research and the ethics review process, please contact **ethics@surrey.ac.uk** for more information.

How to submit an ethics application

Applicants (student researchers) must log in to Ethics RM and complete the online application. The system's responsive design will guide the workflow, determining whether a project requires no review, governance review, or full review, with an automated email advising the applicant. Ethics officers manually allocate reviewers, and applicants can monitor the status of their application in Ethics RM. An Applicant User Guide is available here.

(For studies involving animals, researchers must complete the SAGE ADR ethics application form and follow the subsequent instructions if submission to one of the animal ethics committees is required. For advice and support with this process, please contact awerb@surrey.ac.uk).

Supporting documents should be prepared in advance, including:

- Study protocol including a Risk Assessment and Data Management Plan
- Participant Information Sheets (not required if using secondary data)
- Informed Consent Form (not required if using secondary data)
- Any additional documents (e.g. recruitment materials, questionnaires, data sharing and/or collaboration agreement, gatekeeper approval, interview topic guide, survey questions etc.)

Training and Resources

The Assurance Team offers training sessions throughout the year and provides access to the UKRO Introduction to Research Ethics course. We strongly recommend that you complete these training modules before designing your research and submitting an ethics application via Ethics RM.

Additional resources include:

- **Open Research Training**: Available at the Open Research Training module.
    - Research Data Management, including weekly drops in at the library
- **Guidance on Authorship**: Authorship and Contributors Guidelines.
- **External Resources (recommended for researchers working with human tissue or conducting research in the NHS).**
    - Introduction to Informed Consent From the Global Health Training Centre.

- Good Clinical Practice From the National Institute for Health and Care Research.
- Human Tissue Training

7.1 Avoiding common pitfalls

As a PGR, it is important that you familiarise yourself with documents mentioned in the section above and that that you always carry out your research to the highest levels of integrity and ethical responsibility. The guidance that follows is designed to help you achieve this by offering advice on how to avoid some of the most common mistakes PGRs make that have led to allegations of academic misconduct in their work.

7.1.1 Plagiarism

The simple definition of plagiarism is claiming someone else's work as your own, or not acknowledging someone else's work adequately. This covers the whole range from simply forgetting to reference a picture that you present in a thesis figure to presenting someone else's results as your own, which constitutes serious academic misconduct or, at worst, fraud. The way to avoid plagiarism is to be careful, rigorous and honest.

You must ensure that you take great care to reference any statements that you make properly. Referencing styles vary between different academic disciplines, and your supervisor will be able to provide advice on the preferred style. In science and engineering this is typically a numbered system although Harvard (names and dates) is also used. The IEEE style is commonly used by Electronic Engineering and Computing departments; please read this guide.

It is particularly important that you use appropriate software for bibliography management, especially for numbered systems as they can quickly become difficult to maintain in a complex document. Possibilities include RefWorks or EndNote; students who use LaTeX typesetting may use free open-source software such as JabRef, or other software based on BibTex. More information is available on the library website:
http://www.surrey.ac.uk/library/learning/informationskills/referencing.htm

7.1.2 Copyright infringement

If your thesis includes any materials where the copyright does not belong to you (e.g. images, graphs, maps or even your own published papers copyrighted to the publisher) you will need clear permission to replicate or adapt these materials and use them in your thesis. We strongly advise that you clear permissions as early as possible, as copyright clearance can take time. More information on copyright is available at https://research.surrey.ac.uk/assessments/thesis-submission.

7.1.3 Data Storage

If your project will lead to the generation of novel research data, it is essential that at the outset of your studies you establish adequate systems for ensuring the safety and secure storage within the University's systems of the data you generate as part of your research (not just for the duration of your research degree but afterwards too). The University has put together a helpful resource on managing and storing data throughout the lifecycle of your research project on the Open Research page of MySurrey and in the Open Research section on the University website. Use of this resource will help to ensure that you meet both University and funder expectations for good practice in data management and it will also help you to avoid a research horror story of lost data in crashed computers, lost disks, burglaries or fires.

You will share and discuss the data and your analyses of it with your supervisors and collaborators. You should also bear in mind that examiners may ask to see original material as part of the final examination of your thesis and that you need to deposit on the Surrey Open Research Repository, so make sure that this is kept in a secure and organised manner.

To ensure good data management it is highly advisable to write a Data Management Plan before you begin data generation/collection/measurement, as explained here Data management plans | University of Surrey. You will also need to deposit your Data Management Plan on our Surrey Open Research Repository before your Confirmation .The Library offers a Data Management Plan review service (email openresearch@surrey.ac.uk) and runs weekly drop-in sessions on Level 1 by the entrance gates every Tuesday morning for any data management related questions.

7.1.4 Health and Safety

Health and safety are of paramount importance! You must abide by the health and safety policies so that your working practices do not put yourself or others in harm. The University has an overarching Safety Policy Statement with which you must familiarise yourself.

The information that follows is intended to complement the above policy and will help you to ensure that your research is carried out in a safe way.

Do not undertake any laboratory work until you have attended the 'FEPS New Staff and Student Health & Safety Induction' course which run every two weeks. You may also require an induction for your specific laboratory from the laboratory manager or technical support team. All hazardous laboratory activities must be risk assessed before work begins in order to meet your legal obligations. All laboratory spaces should have their own Health & Safety folder which contains information specific to the facilities within that lab. You may be required to access the information in these folders as part of your individual laboratory induction. They can normally be found near the entrance of the laboratory.

All enquiries relating to Health & Safety in FEPS should be sent to FEPSsafety@surrey.ac.uk. Alternatively, you can contact FEPS Health & Safety Manager Kevin Joyce (k.joyce@surrey.ac.uk, Ext. 6605) or FEPS Health & Safety Adviser Sian Berry (s.s.berry@surrey.ac.uk, Ext. 4868) directly. For more information on Health & Safety in FEPS please visit the Sharepoint site https://surreyac.sharepoint.com/sites/feps-healthandsafety (you will need to be on the University network or connected to the Global Protect VPN to access this).

7.1.5 Authorship of papers and other outputs

Guidance on the development of your Researcher Profiles: Researcher profiles are playing an important role in your academic career. They are an important tool to collect your scholarly records during your career. The Library has developed guidance on the on the different profiles (e.g. ORCID, Scopus ID, Researcher ID |Web of Science|, GoogleScholar): what they are, why they are important, how to claim or correct a profile, and how to link profiles to ORCID and Surrey

Open Research Repository. Please note you are required to create an ORCID profile and link it to the Open Research Repository in your first year as doctoral student.

Guidance on the authorship of publications: The University has developed guidance on the protocols, and associated procedures, which should be followed by supervisors and research students when planning the authorship of external publications, and/or associated other outputs, originating from a doctoral research programme. The guidance is not prescriptive but seeks to establish the terms and references that should inform discussions between students and supervisors wishing to publish outputs that arise from research activity being undertaken under the name and authority of the University of Surrey.

You are advised to read and discuss this guidance with your supervisors in your first supervisory session. Authorship of research works may seem some way off when you first start but it is best to have these open discussions early and to revisit them when you first start to think about producing outputs to ensure you, your supervisory team and any other colleagues and collaborators involved in the research are clear and in agreement about plans for authorship of the work.

Copyright ownership of publications and other research outputs is set out in the University's Intellectual Property Code.

The Open Research Team in the Library provides related advice on managing copyright to your publications, recognising contributions (CRedIT), including published papers within your thesis and publishing under open licenses (including under Green Open Access). The Open Research team also offer advice on how to link your publication with one or more UN Sustainable Goals.

7.1.6 Considerations when choosing a journal for publication

When writing up your research for publication you should discuss publication options with your Supervisor, who will be able to give advice on the most suitable journal. The topic of your research, your intended audience and the journal's policies and guidelines will be among the key factors guiding your decision.

There is a growing number of open access journals, allowing you to publish open access for maximum dissemination and impact of your research. Open access journals typically charge a publication fee, called an Article Processing Charge (APC). The University has limited funds to cover the costs of open access publishing if certain criteria are met. However, there are different Open Access models (e.g. Green Open Access or Pre-prints) you can explore to make your research available without being charged a publication fee by checking our Open Access Publication page or contacting the Open Research team.

In recent years there has been growing concern around so-called 'predatory' or 'untrustworthy' journals, which exploit the open access model by charging publication fees without providing adequate peer review and editorial services. If a journal is not one that you or your supervisor recognises; if the journal has used forceful tactics to solicit content or you have any concerns around its editorial processes, please contact Open Research for further advice before submitting to the journal.

7.1.7 Confidentiality and commercialisation

If your thesis contains any confidential or commercially sensitive material, you may not be able to disseminate your thesis openly as per University regulations. In such cases you will need to discuss with your supervisor and commercial sponsors whether the thesis should be restricted for a specified period (embargo).

Requests to embargo your thesis must be submitted via the restricting access form, available at: Thesis submission | Research | MySurrey. The form needs to be signed by you and your supervisor and, if the reason for restricting is due to commercial interest or patent your principal supervisor will then need to email the form to the IP Manager further details can be found by clicking the link above.

7.2 Research Ethics

All research activities undertaken by PGRs must comply with the University's ethics for teaching and research procedure. This policy sets out the aim of safeguarding and promotes respect for the rights, interests, and well-being of PGRs, staff, research participants/subjects (human and animal) and fellow citizens and communities in local and global contexts. The policy also aims to

preserve the physical environment and social and historical artefacts engaged with by university staff and PGRs.

You should discuss the ethical implications of your research project with supervisors at a very early stage of your research. To guide these discussions, you must refer to the University's Ethics web pages which contain important information to determine whether or not your project requires ethical approval and the steps that you need to follow to acquire it.

If you cannot find the information you need on the ethics web pages, Assurance can be contacted for 1-2-1 advice and guidance ethics@surrey.ac.uk, but cannot pre-review application documents.

Remember that it can sometimes take a while for the ethical approval process to be completed, especially if there are other organisations and/or institutions involved.

There may be an external review process which requires university sponsorship (such as for the NHS, MoD and MetPolice). In any case, it is important that you begin to think about and apply for ethical approval as soon as possible.

Projects involving animals go through a separate review process, please see https://my.surrey.ac.uk/research/ethics for further details.

If you require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check to undertake aspects of your research, please email doctoralcollege@surrey.ac.uk.

8. Researcher Training and Development

Your future success as a professional researcher will require you to think strategically about your abilities, expertise and how these need to develop. Our Doctoral College provides training and advice to help you identify and move forward with your professional development. This includes broad research skills and career planning support.

Vitae is the national organisation established to champion the professional career development of research degree students and research staff. You may find it helpful to refer to their website which includes a wide range of resources. You may also find it helpful to refer to the Researcher Development Framework which was developed by Vitae following a study of the skills used by researchers throughout their careers. The Researcher Development Framework details the knowledge, attitudes and behaviours of successful researchers.

8.1 Researcher Development and Employability Programme

The Doctoral College runs a Researcher Development and Employability Programme which provides professional development and career support for the range of skills outlined in the Researcher Development Framework. It is delivered by members of the Researcher Development and Employability (RDE) team which is made up of highly qualified staff who create and deliver transferable skills training, development opportunities, one-to-one coaching and support, mock vivas and writing consultations. Additional workshops are also delivered by key staff from other departments within the university.

Crucially, they support all Surrey researchers no matter where in the world they are conducting their research, utilising a variety of technologies. RDE continually works with the PGR community to improve and build our provision, and you are always welcome to offer suggestions and work with team members to ensure your needs and those of your fellow researchers are being met.

More information about the programme of workshops and training opportunities can be found on the Postgraduate researcher workshop web pages. For additional information or queries, email RDP@surrey.ac.uk .

Please note that the training is very popular, so you are advised to book yourself onto training sessions well in advance. If you book a session, you must also ensure that you attend. If you are unable to attend, make sure that you inform the RDE so that somebody else can take your place.

8.2 Identifying your training needs

The University recognises that our postgraduate research student population is diverse, welcoming different professional and educational backgrounds, as well as different levels of experience. The training that we offer is tailored to meet your individual needs as a professional researcher so that you can dedicate your time to developing the skills you need for a successful career.

Almost all our workshops are voluntary and can be attended at any point in your doctorate. However, there are **three compulsory workshops**, designed to help you find your feet and prepare for the big milestones within your project:

Workshop	**When (full-time)?**	**When (part-time)?**
Welcome to your Doctorate	Within 3 months of registration	Within 3 months of registration
The Confirmation Process	2 or 3 months before you plan to submit your report (usually within 6 – 12 months of registration)	2 or 3 months before you plan to submit your report (usually within 15 – 27 months of registration)
The Viva Examination	Within 33 – 48 months of registration	Within 48 – 96 months of registration

It is the responsibility of all PGRs to manage their professional development with the support of their supervisory team. You should share your Professional Development Plan with your supervisors and together identify transferable and research training sessions, areas for independent development, as well as opportunities to engage with the wider research community. At doctorate level, much of your research skills training may be in the form of independent study or bespoke one-to-one training with another researcher, rather than taught courses. This is expected and is just as important as attending courses or workshops. Keeping a

record of the activities you undertake is also extremely helpful. RDE can often point you towards useful external resources if we do not offer a workshop on a specific topic. You can also find some Personal Development (PDP) resources here: https://surreyac.sharepoint.com/sites/DoctoralCollegePGRStudentshipInformationCentre/SitePages/Careers-Development-Resources.aspx

Professional development includes presenting and writing about your research, as well as networking with people both within your discipline and beyond. Take the time to identify not just what you need to complete your doctorate, but where you'd like to be in a few years' time, or which skills may be useful for alternative careers. Unsurprisingly, your training needs will develop over time, so you are advised to discuss your professional development needs with your supervisor throughout your degree to ensure you are taking advantage of the training and opportunities available. The Vitae Researcher Development Framework (RDF) can be a useful tool for assessing development needs and identifying strengths in relation to professional development.

Your engagement with professional development activities, including compulsory workshop attendance, will be monitored through the six-monthly progress reviews.

8.3 Writing development and support

Academic writing is more than just a skill of being able to communicate your ideas and research with clarity and confidence. It is inextricably linked with your developing identity as a researcher and academic, and with your discipline's ways of knowledge making. As such, academic writing can vary quite significantly between disciplines. Especially if you have come into your doctorate from industry, if English is not your first language, or if you are switching between disciplines, it may take a good while, and a lot of work, to feel confident in your academic writing. We have an extensive range of writing development opportunities specifically for doctoral researchers, offered both virtually and in person. These include:

- **Two-hour workshops, open to researchers at any stage, organised into three suites:**
  - *Core Writing Skills* ('Writing Critically', 'Writing Coherently' and 'Writing Concisely');
  - *Thesis Writing* workshops (e.g. Getting Started with Thesis Writing', 'Writing a Confirmation Report' and 'Writing a Thesis by Publication');

- *Communicating Research and Getting Published* (e.g. 'Getting Published 1: Writing for Academic Journals', 'Getting Published 2: Publication Strategy and Peer Review' and 'Writing with Impact for Diverse Audiences').

- **One-to-one writing consultations**. These tutorials enable you to get detailed feedback on a piece of writing you have produced and guidance on how you can improve your style, structure or language. (N.B. This is ***NOT*** a proofreading service). Other topics that can be discussed include overcoming writer's block, avoiding procrastination and developing your voice as an academic writer.
- **Virtual Writing Retreats.** These are intensive writing sessions supported by a writing mentor who will encourage and inspire you to make progress on your writing targets. Every year we also offer an intensive two-day *Summer Writing Retreat* which is run in a hybrid format (i.e. you can join either in person or online).
- **AcWriMo (Academic Writing Month).** This is an international initiative which takes place every November, motivating researchers and academics to commit to writing targets and achieve them. At Surrey, we encourage everyone to set themselves specific writing goals, and the month is packed with virtual and face-to-face activities, workshops, and bespoke events and initiatives.

For more information about any of the workshops and/or initiatives detailed above, please contact rdp@surrey.ac.uk.

8.4 Your Career Development – Employability & Engagement

A key component of any professional development plan should be focused on preparing for the next step in your career. To support this, the Doctoral College has a specialist Careers Consultant with expertise in career management and employer engagement, who is part of the RDE team. They are dedicated to supporting Researchers in all aspects of career progression: career development and planning, to make the most of the opportunities presented by the doctorate; decision making; identifying and strengthening employability skills; advising on opportunities to explore different career choices: advising on building connections with doctoral alumni and employers; and aiding you into a successful career as you move on from your research degree at Surrey. Researchers can be ambitious in their career aspirations but are advised to start planning early if so.

The team's external partnerships and relationships across the University provide our PGRs with opportunities to collaborate, network, gain skills and experience.

Opportunities and resources for your career development include:

- **Careers consultations**, impartial and confidential. A meeting with a careers coach offers the opportunity to explore careers ideas and interests, identify transferable skills, explore options, both in academia and beyond, and discuss career development plans. Practical support is also available, from reviewing applications to interview practice.
- Wherever you are in your career journey, whatever your background or experience, whether you have a clear sense of direction or not, everyone is welcome. Book via Pathfinder or email rdp@surrey.ac.uk
- **Employability workshops**, covering a range of topics from CV writing to Preparing for a Post Doc, to Options beyond academia, and Interview Preparation, can be found here: https://www.surrey.ac.uk/researcher-development-programme/development
- **Work Placement / Internships** – An early discussion with the DC Careers Consultant can support you with identifying opportunities and making applications (see how to book under Careers Consultations above).

Surrey Pathfinder is an online resource supported by the Careers and Employability department, providing advice and information on job search and career planning, and details of events and opportunities: https://surreypathfinder.careercentre.me/

Postgraduate researchers may also find it helpful to consult:-

- **Vitae** which supports the professional development of researchers and Jobs.ac.uk both of which have useful tips, guidance and support for building a career within or outside of academia.
- **Euraxess** a pan-European initiative delivering information and support services to professional researchers' No Limits toolkit for career exploration which is available on their website.
- International researchers new to the UK may also find this resource useful:
  International Employability resources
  - Additional resources can be found on the DC Sharepoint here: Careers and Employability

Employer engagement opportunities - every year we aim to support events intended to bring Surrey Researchers together with employers and businesses across a range of sectors. There may be opportunities to present your research at these events. Making connections with a wide range of academic colleagues and professionals is important for any career path.

We are here to support you at all stages of your career journey, so please do not hesitate to get in touch by emailing rdp@surrey.ac.uk.

8.5 Central Space for Postgraduate Research Students

The Doctoral College also acts as a central hub for postgraduate research students and space is available to use for meetings or quiet work. Some of this space needs to be booked in advance and not all rooms have IT and audio-visual equipment. For more information and details on how to book space, please email the Doctoral College.

8.6 Discipline-specific training

In addition to the extensive suite of training and development opportunities provided centrally, there are also many opportunities for you to attend training that is closely related to the type of research you are conducting.

Some online training sessions are accessible via SurreyLearn. These are "getting started" sessions providing introductions to different technologies and the range of topics will be gradually extended. Log in at SurreyLearn and search for 'FEPS Postgraduate Research'. If you require any other information, help or guidance please contact the relevant PGR Director, the Associate Dean (Doctoral College), FEPS or one of the PGR administrators.

It is typical that a PGR might benefit from attending one of our UG or PGT courses from within the Department or wider faculty. Academic staff will normally be happy for any PGR to 'sit in' on a course but attendance at that course is non-credit bearing and would not normally include summative assessment (although a lecturer may often be happy to provide formative assessment). We strongly encourage you to seek out modules that may benefit your studies, and discuss these with your supervisor.

We also encourage you to look at the selection of training offered by our Research Compute team, who manage the High Performance Computing (HPC) clusters at Surrey. The training courses include MATLAB, Python, Git, AI and data visualisation. A list of upcoming training sessions can be found here.

If a training need is identified, it should be discussed with the supervisor in the first instance before contacting the module leader via email. They will be able to arrange enrolment on the course via Surrey learn.

Each School offers PGRs specific training in research and to understand what is available students should speak to their **PGR Director**. Your PGR Director will be able to provide information about:

- Any workshops designed specifically for PGRs which will be helpful in your discipline, for example statistics, research methods etc
- Any Master's modules PGRs might benefit from attending
- Information about research seminars
- Information about journal clubs
- Information about opportunities to present work to peers and staff
- Information about any local conferences/research events PGRs can attend

If a supervisor advises a PGR that they might benefit from attending a taught module offered on an undergraduate or master's programme, the student should complete a Module registration form (available here: https://my.surrey.ac.uk/research/useful-documents. This must be signed off by the supervisor before submitting to the Research Degrees Programme Management team. The form is self-explanatory. Where applicable – you or your supervisor should contact the Module lead to ask permission for you to attend.

The information is then communicated to the relevant teams involved in the process to progress with. The majority of PhD programmes do not include a series of credit bearing modules at FHEQ Level 7 or non-credit bearing taught units which students shall be required to pass before progressing to the research stage of their programme. PGRs should attend these modules for "auditing" or non-assessment purposes only and on the understanding that these modules are

not taken on a credit bearing basis and do not lead to a separate award. Those taken with attendance and assessment are subject to room availability.

8.7 The PGR Conference

Each year a University-wide PGR Conference is held. This researcher-led conference brings together PGRs and ECRs from across the University to share their research through posters or oral presentations. The conference is a vibrant and intellectually stimulating event which enables you to network with academic staff and research students from a variety of disciplines.

All PGRs are strongly encouraged to get involved in the conference either by presenting (posters or oral presentations), chairing sessions, or assisting the organising committee.

8.8 Teaching opportunities

The University recognises the vitally important contribution PGRs make in supporting the learning and teaching of others and in enhancing the wider student experience at Surrey. Participating in teaching activities can provide you with an opportunity to develop a range of personal and academic skills and can help to reinforce knowledge of your subject area.

A **Code of practice for postgraduate researchers who support teaching** has been developed to establish the principles and procedures on which PGRs will be used to support the teaching and learning of taught students. The Code seeks to ensure that wherever PGRs are involved in teaching, appropriate measures are in place to safeguard their experience, those of the students they teach, and the University. The University is dedicated to ensuring that you have been given appropriate support and guidance for your teaching, enabling you to develop your skills and teaching practice.

There are certain restrictions on who can be involved in some teaching activities so please make sure that you refer to the Code of practice to check what you are eligible for before applying.

Those interested in demonstrating must take the **'Demonstrating in Laboratories** workshop through the Researcher Development and Employability Programme in the Doctoral College prior to undertaking any demonstrator role. Those interested in teaching seminars, lectures or small

classroom-style teaching must take the ‘ Introduction to Learning and Teaching’ workshop through Surrey Institute of Education. Any PGR involved in providing undergraduate assessment must also take the 'Assessment and Feedback' course through Surrey Institute of Education. PGRs interested in further developing their skills may take additional courses and may want to consider undertaking the PG Certificate in Learning & Teaching, which is available subject to capacity.

9. Progress Monitoring

Details regarding Progress Monitoring can be found on MySurrey here:

https://research.surrey.ac.uk/assessments/reviewing-your-progress

9.1 Mid-year and Annual progress review

Your progress will be formally monitored every six months through the mid-year and annual review procedures.

- The mid-year review is completed by PGRs between March-May each year so that supervisors and local PGRDs can complete and submit their sections to the Research Degrees Programme Management Team by the end of May.
- The annual review is completed by PGRs between September-November each year so that supervisors and local PGRDs can complete and submit their sections to the Research Degrees Programme Management Team by the end of November.

The purpose of the reviews is to: -

- provide you with feedback on your progress
- ensure that you are on course to complete by your deadline
- keep under review your training and development needs and ensure that you have attended the recommended workshops
- address any weaknesses in your research
- discuss any concerns you may have and bring these to the attention of your PGRD and/or the Admission, Progression and Examination Subcommittee (APESC)

The review process is mandatory and you could end up on the unsatisfactory academic progress procedure if you fail to submit your review within the prescribed timeframe. Your progress must be formally reviewed every six months, starting at the first review point following your registration (mid-year review for September and January starters, and annual review for April and July starters) until submission of your thesis.

Please take the review process seriously and think carefully about how you capture your progress and achievements so that it is clear to your supervisors that you are meeting the targets they have set for you. Remember that this is your time to receive feedback and address any concerns so be honest and open in the review. It is also advisable to attend the workshop offered by the Researcher Development and Employability team on how to get the most out of your reviews.

You will be contacted by the Research Degrees Programme Management Team with details about the review process and the deadline for submission of your part of the form.

9.2 The second year (FT) and fourth year review (PT)

At the point you reach between 24-30 active months' registration as a full-time PGR and 48-54 active months' registration as a part-time PGR, your progress review will include some additional requirements as set out below. Active months are all those months you have been enrolled and not absent from the programme, so will exclude any periods of temporary withdrawal.

The purpose of this enhanced review is to help prepare you to finish your research project and submit your thesis for examination.

In addition to the standard progress review, the second/fourth year review will require submission of:

- a copy of the examiners' report from the Confirmation examination
- a Gantt chart plan for completion (i.e. submission of thesis for examination)
- a draft table of contents for the thesis

Your Confirmation Examiner/s, or PGRD if neither examiner is available, will be asked to attend your progress review meeting or review the paperwork.

9.3 Outcomes of reviews and unsatisfactory academic progress

Your progress will be rated at each formal review from one of the following outcomes:-

On track to submit within my funding period ☐ (if funded)

Outcome of progress review will show as 'submission within registration' in Surrey Self-Service

On track to submit within my registration period but beyond my funding end date ☐ (if funded)

Outcome of progress review will show as 'submission within registration' in Surrey Self-Service

On track to submit within my registration period ☐ (if self-funded)

Outcome of progress review will show as 'submission within registration' in Surrey Self-Service

Concerned about the likelihood of submitting within my registration period ☐

Outcome of progress review will show as 'submission may exceed registration' in Surrey Self-Service

Unlikely to submit within my registration period ☐

Outcome of progress review will show as 'unsatisfactory progress'* in Surrey Self-Service

Unsatisfactory Progress

If your progress is deemed to be 'Unlikely to submit within my registration period' (shown as 'unsatisfactory progress' in Surrey Self-Service), or if your review is not completed in the required timescale, then the Regulations for research degrees (A2) require that you are placed on unsatisfactory academic progress (UAP) procedures. In this situation, you would be given at least three months to meet specified targets. Your progress would be reviewed at the end of the three months in a review meeting chaired by an Associate Dean (Doctoral College) and would include an academic outside of the supervisory team. If the targets have not been met to the required standard, then it is a regulatory requirement that registration for the degree is terminated. Unsatisfactory academic progress procedures can be invoked between reviews if serious concerns about a PGR's progress emerge.

In the unlikely event that you find yourself on unsatisfactory academic progress procedures, it is important that you do not panic. You should think carefully about the targets that have been set and discuss them in detail with your supervisors to ensure that you are clear about what is expected of you. Remember no supervisor wants their PGR to fail and the purpose of unsatisfactory academic progress procedures is to take decisive action to get PGRs back on track so that they can complete in the required timescales.

The process for overseeing the outcomes of reviews is managed by the Associate Dean (Doctoral College); the outcomes are then reported to the Admission, Progression and Examination Subcommittee (APESC).

Information pertaining to this process including possible outcomes, can also be found via the **following link:** https://www.surreyunion.org/your-support/pgr-support-hub/unsatisfactory-academic-progress

10. Confirmation of Registration

10.1 What is confirmation?

Confirmation is the formal examination for which you must write a Confirmation Report and undergo a *viva voce* exam. All PGRs, including MDs are required to go through the Confirmation process to 'confirm' their registration. A doctoral researcher's skills and their project should evolve considerably over the first year of study. It is, therefore, appropriate to assess progress at this point and provide formal feedback to ensure the project is on track for timely submission. As such, the confirmation process is a formal assessment of the feasibility of on-time completion of the doctorate based on progress within this first year. It is a peer-review process in which academics outside of the supervisory team read a report written by the doctoral researcher about their progress thus far and their plans for future research and then examine the candidate by *viva voce* (oral exam). Both the confirmation report and *viva voce* are essential components of this assessment and the doctoral candidate must perform satisfactorily in both elements to continue with their doctorate.

You should look upon the Confirmation as a useful exercise to receive external opinions (from your assessors) on your project, and as a time to take stock of where you are in your research and how you are going to complete your research degree on time. At least one of your supervisors should be present at the *viva voce* as it is useful for them to hear the feedback you are given. There will be an opportunity at the end of the *viva voce* for you to speak to your confirmation examiners in the absence of your supervisor/s.

To help you prepare for the process and ensure you fully understand the requirements, you are required to take the Confirmation Process workshop before undertaking the examination. It is recommended that you register for this workshop approximately 3 months prior to submitting your report, as the workshop will provide guidance on both the written report and the *viva voce*.

All Confirmation forms can be found on MySurrey here: Useful documents | Research | MySurrey

Confirmation report guidelines are stored on SurreyLearn here: The Doctorate Process - Doctoral College Common Room (surrey.ac.uk)

10.2 When does Confirmation occur?

The regulations for research degrees indicate that confirmation for students registered on a traditional PhD or MD degree, will normally take place nine to 15 months after initial registration for full-time students and 18 to 30 months for part-time students, however faculty specific rules do apply to the timing of the confirmation.

For those programmes with a structured taught element the confirmation must take place no later than 24 months for full-time PGRs and no later than 48 months for part-time PGRs.

If you find that you cannot make the deadline by which you need to submit your confirmation report, you may need to apply for the consideration of Extenuating Circumstances (ECs). Refer to Section 11 of this Handbook . **However**, please do initially discuss a request for an extension with your **supervisor and postgraduate research director.**

The principal aims of the Confirmation procedure are as laid out in the Code of practice for research degrees.

10.3 Who will my Assessors be?

You and your supervisors should discuss who would be appropriate assessors for your Confirmation. You need two assessors, normally both members of University staff but one could be external if you are a member of staff. One of the assessors will be designated to chair the *viva voce* examination. Your supervisor will complete the Confirmation Examiner Nomination form naming these examiners and submit it in advance to your PGRD for approval.

10.4 What do I need to do for the report?

Faculty and, where applicable, department/school specific guidance documents detailing the format and content of the confirmation report can be found by logging in to SurreyLearn and navigating to the Doctoral College Common Room/The PhD Process.

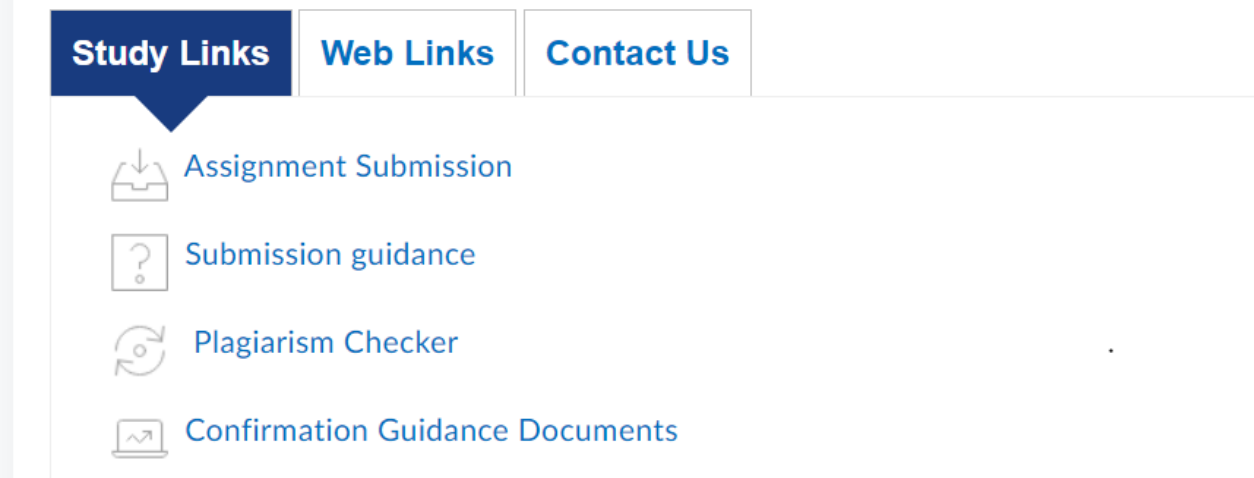
Submitting your report

How to submit your Confirmation Report using SurreyLearn

Go to the SurreyLearn homepage and then the “FEPS Postgraduate Research” page.

Homepage - FEPS Postgraduate Research (surrey.ac.uk)

Once on this page, you will see the following:



To submit your work, either click the “Assignment Submission” link in this area or at the top of the screen by clicking ‘Assignments’, this will load a screen with the appropriate assignment submission folder shown, click on this link and you will be able to submit your Confirmation Report. Confirmation Reports will be checked by Turnitin (a plagiarism checker) for plagiarism without saving the work in the database.

If you experience issues uploading your confirmation report please view the Help section on the SurreyLearn page or contact: SurreyLearnHelp (TEL) SurreyLearnHelp@surrey.ac.uk.

The principal supervisor will advise the student of the date, venue and time of the confirmation examination. The student will be required to submit the report at least ten working days prior to the examination.

Please refer to your School (dept/centre) Confirmation Guidance regarding any local arrangements. Confirmation Guidance Documents are available via here

https://research.surrey.ac.uk/useful-documents which links to the Doctoral College SurreyLearn Page.

This should include the requirement to submit electronic copies or soft-bound copies to your supervisor and how your report is submitted to the examiners. (The submission to your examiners does not involve uploading to FEPS or Doctoral College SurreyLearn. Please ensure your examiners do receive a copy).

Your supervisor should be responsible for your confirmation viva arrangements. However, that is determined at local (school) level.

10.5 Confirmation Outcome(s)

Your assessors will question you directly about your Confirmation Report and about the background to and context of your research. They will make their recommendations and give you feedback accordingly.

The signed form with the examiners' recommendation which has been signed off by your Programme Director **MUST be sent** to the appropriate administrator within the Research Degrees Programme Management Team who will seek formal approval from your
Faculty Associate Dean (Doctoral College).

The Research Degrees Programme Management Team should receive the examiners completed form **once it has been submitted to your School admin or Programme Director** who will then submit the signed form to the Research Degrees Programme Management (RDPM) Team for processing.

Once the form is received by the RDPM, it will be referred to and reviewed by the FEPS ADDC for sign off.

Following standard procedures the fully signed form is then returned to the PGR with their official outcome notification (copying supervisor, school admin) and student records, if the outcome is confirmed. Student Records will then update the status from PhD Probation to PhD Confirmed.

The event date and that milestone is updated and you can view that via your surrey self service record. (As with any changes to registration and key milestone events you can view via your surrey self service record).

You are required to upload your confirmation report to SurreyLearn. However, in addition to this your examiners **must** be sent a copy of your report as they do not have access to SurreyLearn. **Please ensure** you discuss with your supervisor and/or school admin.

You may pass first time, or you may be told to revise the report and resubmit after three months (six months for part-time PGRs), with or without another *viva voce*.

Resubmission outcome

If you are asked to resubmit, it means that the assessors have some doubts as to one or more of the criteria above, and they will articulate their comments and requirements on the 'Confirmation review form (first attempt)'. It may not be through any fault of yours, it may be due to problems with the feasibility of the project, for example, that have come to light during the first year of the research. If you need to resubmit your confirmation report, you **should follow the same process** as for the **first submission**. You will be given a deadline by which to submit your report, which may include a further *viva voce.* Following the examiners' assessment, the Research Degrees Programme Management Team will receive the examiners' report and send it for review and approval to the Faculty Associate Dean (Doctoral College).

If you do not pass Confirmation at the second attempt, the assessors may recommend on the 'Confirmation review form (final attempt)' that you change from PhD or MD to MPhil registration, or they may recommend termination of your registration altogether; both of these outcomes would require approval by APESC. International PGRs studying on a student visa should be aware that a change from PhD or MD to MPhil may have visa implications. These last outcomes are rare, but they do happen, so you **MUST** take your Confirmation seriously, however, if all is going well, as it does for most people, it will be a useful experience.

PGRs should also consider any **funding implications.**

If you take a period of temporary withdrawal during your confirmation of registration period then please ensure your confirmation and viva timeline is adjusted to accommodate that absent period. Please liaise with your school admin and/or supervisor who manage confirmation viva.

11. Extenuating Circumstances

If you are unable to meet an assessment deadline you may be asked to submit an application for Extenuating Circumstances (ECs).

It is important to check with your Research Degrees Programme Management Team contact before applying for ECs as this process is managed outside of the Doctoral College, by a central team within Academic Registry, and it may not be the most appropriate route for you.

Only in the following situations may you be required to submit an application for ECs:-

- You cannot meet the deadline for an assessment for a credit bearing module or taught unit that you are taking as part of your doctoral programme;
- You cannot meet the deadline for your confirmation report;
- You cannot meet the deadline for a target set as part of unsatisfactory academic progress procedures.

IMPORTANT

Unlike taught students, you do not apply for a temporary withdrawal through the ECs process. PGR requests for temporary withdrawal are made through the monthly Admission, Progression and Examination Subcommittee (APESC) committee process, which is explained in **Section 13.**

12. Completing Status

Completing status (or 'writing-up' as it is sometimes referred to) is a reduced fee status within your period of registration which you can transfer onto once you are within 12 months of submitting your thesis. Transferring to completing status does not extend your registration end date, it is a change to your mode of attendance. You can transfer to completing status as a full-time or a part-time PGR.

The current completing status **(writing up)** fees can be found here:
Fees and Funding

You will continue to receive full supervision whilst on completing status and you must continue to log your monthly supervision meetings. You will also be expected to submit Progress Reviews whilst on completing status in line with the timeframes advertised by the Faculty Research Degrees Team.

Usually once you submit your thesis you will no longer be in receipt of further maintenance payments. For any queries regarding maintenance payments whilst on Completing status, please liaise with your supervisor, in the first instance.

Transferring to completing status before submitting your thesis is not a requirement and funded PGRs may find that it is not beneficial for them to transfer to this status as it may impact on their eligibility for any remaining stipendiary payments. Check your funder's terms and conditions before making a request to transfer to completing status if you are still within your funded period. **Once your funding comes to an end you will be charged full fees until your application to transfer to completing status has been approved.** Further information can be found here: Completing status | Research | MySurrey.

Once you and your supervisors are confident that you will be able to submit your thesis for examination within the next twelve months, you may apply to transfer to completing status by submitting a request via your Surrey Self-Service Research programme record under the Requests tab, further details are in Section 13.

When making a request to transfer to completing status a PGR **MUST** also initiate the process of approving the examiner for their final examination by submitting an Exam Entry Form, which is made as a separate request.

Please also refer to Section 14.1 Stage 1 Entry form for Examination

The criteria governing the transfer to completing status applies to both full-time and part-time PGRs and is set out in the Regulations for research degrees (A2) as follows:-

- Your supervisor can confirm that they are satisfied that submission of the thesis within twelve months is feasible
- You are only making use of the University's general facilities
- You are no longer using any specialist facilities (such as laboratories)
- You are receiving advice solely related to the writing up of the thesis

You will be asked to confirm that you have met the regulatory requirements for transfer and you will be required to provide the following:-

- A **detailed plan for submission** covering both yours and your supervisors' responsibilities for submission within the next twelve months or by the end of the registration period if completing status will last for fewer than twelve months
- A **draft table of contents** for the thesis (uploaded to the completing status request)
- Your **Examination Entry form** (separate request to be made via: Surrey Self-Service/Research programme details/Requests tab)

The request needs to be endorsed by your supervisor, your local PGRD and the Associate Dean (Doctoral College). It will then be considered by the Admission, Progression and Examination Subcommittee (APESC).

Please note that retrospective applications for completing status will not be considered unless there are valid reasons supported by evidence.

Please request to start your period on completing status from the 1st of the month to avoid paying full fees for that month.

Please also note that your transfer to completing status cannot be considered by the committee **until you have submitted an Examination Entry Form.** This means that you have initiated the form and it is, at least with your supervisors for completion.

You must submit a thesis for examination before the end of the completing period. **If problems arise and you are unable to submit your thesis for examination by the end of your approved completing status period, you must request an Extension to Completing Status via the Faculty Research Degrees Team. Please be aware that only in exceptional circumstances will an extension be approved by APESC.** If you reach the maximum period of registration and you have not submitted your thesis, your registration may be terminated unless you have valid grounds for an extension.

If you are still funded then transferring to completing status before that funded ceases would not usually be necessary as you will be liable for your fees as the studentship will cease as of the effective from date of the completing status transfer.
https://my.surrey.ac.uk/research/guidance-and-support/completing-status

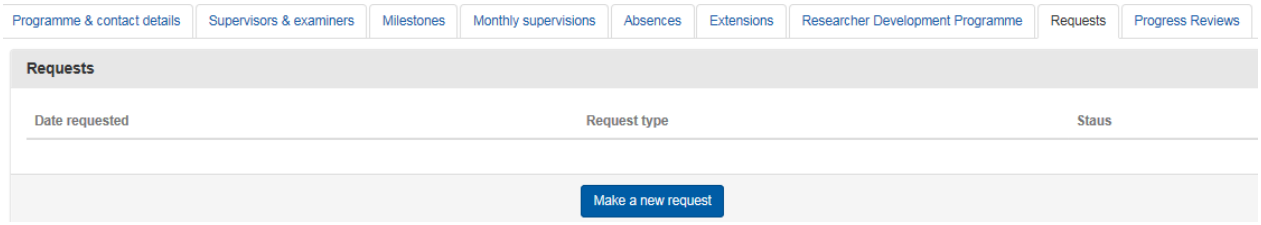
There is no difference with completing status fee if you are a home or international PGR or full or part-time status.

13. Changes to registration

Requests for changes to your registration are made via your Surrey Self-Service research programme record. You should find the system intuitive, however if you need further help or advice, please contact the Faculty Research Degrees Team. The approval stages are completed online. You can view each stage of your request including its *status* and who the *action is with* online via your Surrey Self Service record. The requests available to you are:

- Temporary Withdrawal and sick pay
- Change of Mode (part-time, full-time)
- Change of Programme
- Change of Supervisor (including additions)
- Transfer to Completing Status
- Exam Entry Form
- Extension to Registration
- Permanent Withdrawal

There are several tabs within your research programme record (see below) and the tab under which you make requests for changes to registration is called 'Requests'.



A request, once submitted, will be sent to your supervisors and local postgraduate research director and finally submitted to the Faculty Research Degrees Team. The Faculty Research Team will then refer that request to the Faculty Associate Dean (Doctoral College) for review, prior to scheduling to APESC for consideration.

Please refer to the APESC calendar for deadlines and meeting dates.

You can track the status of your request under the Requests tab and you will be informed of the outcome of your request, **usually within 10 working days of the meeting**, by **email from Student Records or from the secretary to APESC,** depending on the type and outcome of the request.

This is an online process and all those involved in the approval workflow can view the request

online via surrey self-service.

Once those requests have been approved by a Surrey supervisor and research degrees programme director it will arrive with the research degrees programmes team (RDO dashboard) for further processing. Sign off only requires either your Principal Supervisor or Co-supervisor – not both..

Requests are then referred to the FEPS ADDC for consideration and sign off prior to then scheduling to APESC for consideration.

APESC meetings are normally held on a Wednesday and the 2026-2027 calendar can be found under the Governance section above.

There is no August APESC.

13.1 Temporary withdrawal and sick pay

If, during your registration, illness or personal difficulties of sufficient gravity have prevented you from progressing your research, you may be granted temporary withdrawal for a period necessary to overcome the difficulty. In some cases, PGRs may also request a period of temporary withdrawal in order to undertake a short-term work placement.

Your period of registration will be adjusted by the same number of months you are temporarily withdrawn, so you do not need to be concerned that it will adversely impact on your maximum period of registration. You will not normally be permitted to interrupt your studies for more than twelve months aggregate unless the absence is for parental leave.

- Applications for temporary withdrawal must be initiated within one month of the start of the requested period, except in exceptional circumstances, for example emergency hospitalisation or bereavement.
- Retrospective applications will only be considered in exceptional circumstances and must be supported be a compelling evidence based case that the delay in applying was beyond your control.

PGRs can request a period of temporary withdrawal via their Surrey Self-Service research programme record, as described above. If the reason for the temporary withdrawal fits within the

criteria for sick pay, as set out in the **PGR Absence Procedure**, then you will be granted sick pay. **Your eligibility will depend on your funding arrangements**. Please read the PGR Absence Procedure for eligibility criteria. The Regulations for research degrees (A2) outline the sorts of circumstances under which a period of temporary withdrawal would be agreed.

Do not submit an extenuating circumstances application this will not adjust your registration end date.

It is also extremely important that you review your funder terms and conditions to check their procedure *before* requesting temporary withdrawal.

During the temporary withdrawal, you will temporarily leave your programme of study and lose your registration status as an enrolled PGR. No supervision will be received, and specialist facilities such as labs cannot be accessed during this time.

Please note you will be charged a full month fee liability for any part of the month attended, so please take this into account when considering the period that you are looking to temporarily withdraw and **therefore it is advisable , if possible, to start your temporary withdrawal on the 1st day of the month and finish on last day of the month.**) . You will not be charged any fee liability for any full calendar months that you are temporarily withdrawn within these start and end dates.

If you are requesting temporary withdrawal for reasons other than illness, jury service, or parental leave, and you are a funded doctoral student, you have the option of continuing to receive your funding package for up to a maximum one month in a 12-month period, unless the temporary withdrawal is a funded internship or paid placement. Funding will then be suspended from the end of the first month of temporary withdrawal until you return to your doctoral degree.

You must inform your supervisor and the Research Degrees Programme Management Team when you return to your studies to ensure that your record is updated from 'absent' to 'enrolled'. Only resume studying on the basis that you are fit to do so and that the difficulties have been overcome satisfactorily. If you are not able to return to your programme you must

submit a new request to adjust your period of temporary withdrawal. You must advise your supervisors and the Research Degrees Programme Management Team as soon as problems arise and keep them updated about matters affecting your studies.

You are required to submit a new application each time you request a suspension of your studies. Emails asking to extend your current timeline is not acceptable so please submit a new application for the further (or continued period).

In addition please ensure you include the date you have returned to your studies.

Unauthorised periods are not recognised.

Please Note: If you are a Funded PGR and fail to notify the RDPM of your resumption of studies, this could affect your maintenance payments.

International PGRs

Requests for temporary withdrawal made by PGRs studying on a student visa will also be checked by the University's Immigration Compliance Office to ensure that the request complies with Home Office rules on length and frequency of absence. Currently a PGR on a student visa may request 60 days or less temporary withdrawal if they wish to remain in the UK. For longer periods of temporary withdrawal, the University would be required to withdraw sponsorship. In all cases it is advisable to discuss your case with the International Student Advice team based in the Hive, particularly if you are interested in applying for the Graduate Visa following completion of the research degree. You can book either an online or in person appointment.

For more information relating to visa responsibilities and changes your registration can be found here: https://research.surrey.ac.uk/useful-documents - Postgraduate researchers - visa responsibilities and changes to your registration

13.2 Extension to registration

Any request for an extension to the maximum period of registration must be made well in advance of the deadline. Extensions to registration will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances in accordance with the criteria set out in the Regulations for research degrees (A2). **Poor planning or lack of academic progress would not, for example, be acceptable reasons.** Applications from PGRs who have exceeded their original submission deadline and who cannot

provide evidence in line with the criteria set out in the regulations and which demonstrates why they were prevented from applying for an extension in advance of their end of registration, will have their registration terminated.

Do not submit an extenuating circumstances application this will not adjust your registration end date.

International PGRs

International PGRs studying on a student visa are advised to contact International Student Advice (ISA) for immigration advice on the implications to their visa status of making a request for an extension to registration, particularly if they are interested in applying for the Graduate Visa following completion of the research degree.

For general advice please check the information on MySurrey Help first or if you have a specific query please utilise Surrey Support. You can also book appointments with ISA here.

13.3 Other changes to registration

Other less common requests for changes to registration include changes to mode of attendance (MoA), for example, from full-time registration to part-time registration, and change of programme. If you wish to consider applying for these types of changes, please discuss them with your supervisors, check any funding implications, and if you are studying on a student visa, speak to the International Student Advice team (contact details above).

If you are considering permanently withdrawing from your research degree, it is important that you discuss this with your supervisory team and/or your local PGRD before making the final decision. Speaking to others helps PGRs to understand if withdrawal is the right option for them and often, they discover other sources of help and support which mean that permanent withdrawal can be avoided. However, the decision to withdraw might be the right thing to do in some circumstances.

Please note: There is no exit award if you decide to permanent withdrawal from your programme

14. Thesis submission and the viva voce examination

All doctoral degrees and MPhils are examined by thesis and an oral examination commonly known as the *viva voce* examination. The section that follows is designed to help you navigate the examination process by setting out the key stages involved. You should take the compulsory Viva Examination workshop run by the Doctoral College Researcher Development and Employability team around six months prior to your *viva voce* date, to ensure you fully understand the requirements and expectations of this final assessment.

Please refer to the Regulations for research degrees - A2: Regulations for research degrees for further details on this stage of your doctoral programme.

14.1 Stage 1: Entry Form for Examination

PGRs should initiate the process of approving the examiners for their final examination by submitting an Exam Entry form request via their Surrey-Self Service research programme record. The Exam Entry form must be submitted at the same time as the request for **transfer to completing status** is made. If no request to transfer to completing status is made, then you must ensure that the Exam Entry Form is submitted no later than two months before you intend to submit your thesis. **Failure to submit the form in time will delay your *viva voce* examination**. Following your submission of the exam entry form, this should be completed **by your supervisor no later** than two months prior to your thesis submission. To allow sufficient time for the exam entry form to be processed and scheduled to APESC.

You will be required to provide the title of your thesis, an indication of the date you intend to submit your thesis, confirm whether you will be submitting your thesis in the format of a monograph **or** papers prepared for publication, and agree to the academic integrity declaration. The thesis title you provide on this form will be the final title of the thesis you submit for examination. If you do need to amend the thesis title after this time, you should contact the Research Degrees Programme Management Team and they will advise whether the change requires the approval of the Faculty Associate Dean (Doctoral College).

Your supervisors will be required to complete the section which asks for details of the nominated examiners (normally one internal examiner and one external examiner). Your supervisors will be asked to confirm that the examiners meet the regulatory criteria for appointment, and they will also be asked to provide written justification for the selection of the examiners and why they are well-suited to examine your project. Your supervisors will ensure your examiners are aware of the format in which you will be presenting your thesis for examination: as a monograph or as papers prepared for publication.

The date on your exam entry form is a guide, which should correspond to your **completion status** request – if you are requesting to transfer to completing status.
It is not your end of registration date—which is the absolute latest a PGR must submit their thesis by. We expect the submission date entered on both the exam entry form and the **completion status request** to be reasonably close to when you will submit. If your submission is going to be significantly later than originally planned, your supervisor may need to notify the examiners so they can adjust their schedules, as they typically set aside specific time to review your thesis.

Regardless of the exam entry form status and whether it has been scheduled or pending approval by APESC, this does not prevent a PGR submitting their thesis within registration. Once the form is approved, there are then several admin tasks performed before the thesis is dispatched to the examiners.
Delays in submitting your exam entry form could impact on the approval process and admin timelines (please refer to APESC calendar).
Your thesis cannot be dispatched to the examiners until your exam entry form has been approved by APESC.

Non Disclosure Agreement (NDA)

If an NDA is required then this process is the responsibility of the PGR and their Supervisor to manage.
We would expect conversations surrounding this subject to take place between the PGR and their supervisor before the thesis submission to the Research Degrees (Doctoral Collage)/RDPM.

We expect the NDA agreement to be in place prior to the RDPM dispatching the thesis to the examiners.

- Supervisor and PGR should be discussing if there is an NDA requirement.

Once the NDA is completed, then the Research degrees (Doctoral College) researchdegrees@surrey.ac.uk need to be notified, that the examiners have completed/signed the NDA. The RDPM can then dispatch the thesis to the examiners.

- If you or your supervisor do not notify the RDPM that there is an NDA in place, then it is likely that the thesis, will be dispatched to the examiners without that NDA being set-up.
- It would be sensible that the PGR and/or Supervisor ensure this is sorted prior to submission of the thesis to the RDPM team and/or at the point of submission.
- We would advise that the PGR to provide a status of the NDA when submitting their thesis to the Research Degrees (Doctoral Collage)/RDPM team.

14.2 Stage 2: Approval of nominated examiners

Once your Entry Form has been submitted by your supervisor and agreed by your local PGRD, the Research Degrees Programme Management Team will ask your Associate Dean (Doctoral College) to review the information on the form and the examiners' on-line profile to check the suitability of the examination panel. The Exam Entry Form request will then be scheduled to a meeting of the Admission, Progression and Examination Subcommittee (APESC) for final consideration.

The Research Degrees Programme Management Team will contact your supervisors if there is a problem.

14.3 Stage 3: Thesis submission for examination

Details regarding thesis submission can be found on the Research pages of MySurrey here: https://research.surrey.ac.uk/assessments/thesis-submission

Once a thesis is submitted, the PGR receives an email confirmation containing key information and instructions, which is also copied to their supervisor and school administrator. At each stage from submission to award, the PGR receives relevant email communications from the research degrees programme management team. The supervisor and school administration are kept

copied in, and the supervisor is provided with key information and instructions at each major milestone too.

It is not the responsibility of the research degrees programme management team to review your thesis. We will check that you have included a signed statement of originality and confirm receipt of your thesis submission.

The University expects a full-time PGR to submit an electronic version of the thesis for examination within 36 months, or within the funded-period, and a part-time PGR to submit within 72 months, or within the funded period.

The electronic submission must be emailed to researchdegrees@surrey.ac.uk **no later than the day of your submission deadline,** which for a full-time PGR will be month 48 of registration and for a part-time PGR, month 96 (the maximum registration deadline).

Please check your Surrey Self Service record to see your correct end of registration date.

You can submit the thesis in Word or PDF format and for larger documents we suggest you 'send and share' using Drop off Surrey so it is easier for the Research Degrees Programme Management Team to access and dispatch your thesis to the examiners. Please give access to the following email account: researchdegrees@surrey.ac.uk.

The thesis is the presentation of your original work. While the supervisory team may offer guidance before the submission of the thesis, the ultimate responsibility for the content must rest with you. It is your responsibility to submit the thesis for examination to the Research Degrees Programme Management Team within the maximum period of registration. You may submit without the support of your supervisors; however, it is strongly recommended that you submit a full draft of your thesis to your supervisory team ahead of your submission deadline, allowing enough time to make any amendments they may recommend.

Paragraphs 17-21 of the Regulations for research degrees sets out what the thesis must demonstrate for award of a PhD, an MPhil, an MD and a practitioner doctorate. The criteria for

award, as set out in these paragraphs, is the same regardless of whether the thesis has been presented as a monograph or as papers prepared for publication. If, after discussion with your supervisors, you choose to submit a thesis that includes chapters prepared in publication format, please ensure that you read the guidance available on My Surrey PhD by Publication | Research | MySurrey. Ask your supervisor, or academics in your field, if they have previously supervised theses in this format so that you can search the online e-thesis repository for examples.

The University does not enforce a minimum word limit for a doctoral or an MPhil thesis. It is, however, recommended that the thesis does not exceed the maximum word limit of 100,000 words in all but the most exceptional circumstances for a PhD thesis, and does not exceed the maximum word limit of 60,000 words for an MPhil thesis. The maximum word limit is exclusive of documentary or statistical appendices, references and bibliography; and is inclusive of footnotes and other appendices.

Thesis format and presentation

- All pages should be numbered in one continuous sequence, i.e. from the title page of the first volume to the last page of type, in Arabic numerals from 1 onwards. This sequence must include appendices, blank pages, etc.
- The title page shall bear the title given on the Exam Entry Form, the PGR's name, the degree for which the PGR is registered, the year in which the thesis is presented (submitted for examination) and the logo of the University of Surrey.
- A summary of the work, not exceeding 300 words in length and a signed Statement of Originality must be included (see below).
- The University does not prescribe a font for use in theses but you must select a font that it is professional. Double or one-and-a-half spacing should be used.
- Thesis should be organised in the following way:
    - Title page
    - Declaration of originality: *This thesis and the work to which it refers are the results of my own efforts. Any ideas, data, images or text resulting from the work of others (whether published or unpublished, and including any content generated by a deep learning/artificial intelligence tool) are fully identified as such within the work and attributed to their originator in the text, bibliography or in footnotes. This thesis*

has not been submitted in whole or in part for any other academic degree or professional qualification. I agree that the University has the right to submit my work to the plagiarism detection service TurnitinUK for originality checks. Whether or not drafts have been so assessed, the University reserves the right to require an electronic version of the final document (as submitted) for assessment as above.

- A summary of the work not exceeding 300 words must be included
- Acknowledgements
- Full table of contents and a list of tables, photographs and any other materials
- Main Body of thesis: This is generally organised into chapters but the format and content of these vary according to the subject and discipline. Ask your supervisor for advice and for an example of a good thesis in a similar subject area to your own
- Appendices

Once submitted, your thesis will be emailed to the appointed examiners so that they can prepare a pre-*viva* report prior to your oral examination. Fees cease once you submit your thesis. The Fees and Funding team calculate tuition fees based on your thesis submission date, and please be aware that if you **submit part way through a month you will be liable for fees for that whole month.**

As you are still considered enrolled up until the point of award, if appropriate, you will still need to re-register at the relevant time.

Please note that the thesis should not be sent directly to the examiners by you or your supervisors. You should also be respectful of the impartiality of your examination panel, and you must refrain from contacting them directly, in advance of the examination. In the unlikely event that you think there is a need to contact your examiners, please speak to your supervisor in the first instance. If appropriate, they will arrange for a member of the University staff to contact the examiner. In normal circumstances, there should be no reason for you to contact your examiners, but post examination is permissible for students, when necessary, to contact internal examiners for the purpose of clarification on corrections or revisions. Communication must be limited as examiners are not to be drawn into a supervisory relationship.

14.4 Stage 4: Viva voce examination

Guidance on preparing for your *viva voce* and the recommendations that are available to your examiners can be found on MySurrey here: Viva voce examination and award | Research | MySurrey

Viv voce examinations are conducted in person. Exceptionally, on a case-by-case basis and in agreement with all parties, the viva voce examination may be conducted in hybrid/online mode. The Research Degrees Programme Management Team will request details of the arrangements for your exam from your **supervisory team.** If you have any queries concerning your *viva voce* exam you should contact the Research Degrees Programme Management Team. The Researcher Development team can offer mock vivas to help you prepare for your viva and have developed guidance materials for virtual vivas, which are available on MySurrey.

The viva normally takes place between 30 and 90 days after submission of your thesis. If the viva is required to take place outside of this period due to exceptional circumstances, then a request must be submitted to APESC. Your supervisor should contact the Research Degrees Programme Management Team for advice.

Your supervisor will be required to complete a Late Viva, Early Viva form. Providing supporting evidence, that all parties (you, your examiners, and your supervisors) agree to the date of the viva and that it is understood that the viva is taking place outside of the regulatory period will be required.

The completed form should be submitted to the Research Degrees Programme Management Team to refer this to the relevant Associate Dean of the Doctoral College for consideration and approval. This will be noted by the Admission, Progression and Examination Sub-committee.

When we have been unable to adhere to the regulatory timeframe for a viva, these statements ensure we have an audit trail to demonstrate that the University has acted in the best interests of the PGR, in the event of any disputes or discrepancies at a later stage and APESC will then note this request. Only when APESC have noted the request may the *viva voce* examination exceptionally be held outside of the usual timeframe.

Supervisors are **not expected to be present** at the *viva voce* examination, but they should be available for the conclusion of the examination when the examiners' give their recommendation

and any required corrections to the thesis are explained. In exceptional circumstances, PGRs may make a written case to the Associate Dean (Doctoral College) to request that their supervisor attend the *viva voce* examination. The case must explain why the presence of the supervisor is necessary to ensure the effective and proper conduct of the examination. On the rare occasion that a supervisor is present at the examination they must not participate in the examination and may only speak if invited to do so by the chair.

If you believe you will be unable to attend your scheduled viva, you must contact your supervisors and the Research Degrees Programme Management Team as soon as possible. Where there are no confirmed extenuating circumstances, non-attendance of the viva voce examination will result in an academic failure and lead to programme termination and discontinuation of registration in accordance with the Regulations for research degrees (A2).

You must submit your thesis for examination no later than your registration end date; your viva can take place after your end of registration date. This will usually take place between 30 and 90 days after thesis submission.

14.5 Stage 5: Decision

At the conclusion of the *viva voce* examination, you will be asked to leave the room. For online *viva voces* there will be a virtual waiting room, or you will be asked to dial out of the video conference and contacted when you can rejoin. The examination panel will then confer and are required to select one of the outcomes permitted by the Regulations for research degrees (A2). You, and your supervisor if they have been waiting, will then be asked to rejoin the (virtual) exam room once this decision has been made.

The most common outcomes are 'award', 'award subject to minor corrections', or 'award subject to minor revisions'. Some candidates are asked to resubmit their thesis with or without a further oral examination. If you do receive a resubmission outcome, please ensure that you meet regularly with your supervisors during the resubmission year so they can support you as you prepare your resubmission. On a very small number of occasions, PGRs have failed the *viva voce* outright or following a resubmission, or have been offered the lower award of MPhil, however this is extremely rare and the University's pass rate at the *viva voce* is consistently very high.

Following receipt of the examiners' report, the research degrees programme management team will send an email confirmation to the PGR. This email contains key information and instructions, and is copied to their supervisor and school administrator within a reasonable timeframe.

It is fine for you to go beyond your registration end date for your viva and corrections/revisions period. You will remain enrolled as a PhD student until you are awarded. Your registration end date only applies to your thesis submission, meaning you must submit your thesis by this date. The revisions/corrections period does not change or extend your registration end date.

International PGRs

Please refer to the https://my.surrey.ac.uk/research/useful-documents - International postgraduate research students

Information and guidance for research students studying on a student visa:

- Guidance for international research students using the student route

Or contact International Student Advice (ISA) via Surrey Support as the experts to advise on visa conditions and responsibilities.

Please note:

It is not possible for us to provide a definitive timeline for the completion of your PhD. Please note that many of your questions can be answered by the information and guidance in the **PGR Faculty Handbook.** The **regulations** also outline specific details regarding examiners' recommendations and timescales.

While we have set internal timelines, we cannot guarantee timeframes that fall outside of our control, including the processing speeds of the individuals and services responsible for the steps between your viva and your final award. At each key milestone from thesis submission to award (as outlined in the PGR Handbook), you will receive an email with instructions from RDPM, Doctoral College. Please be aware that processing outcomes is not immediate.

These milestones include:

- Thesis submission
- Viva (oral examination)
- Pre- and post-viva documentation from examiners

- Viva outcome notification
- Post-viva corrections/revisions period
- Examiner approval of the revised thesis
- E-thesis upload
- Final award

Information pertaining to thesis submission to viva and award – and timelines can be found here in the PGR Faculty handbook and Regulations for research degrees (A2).

14.6 Stage 6: E-thesis deposit

You must complete any corrections required to the satisfaction of the internal examiner or one of the externals if there were two externals at the *viva voce*. In the case of a resubmission outcome, you would have to repeat stage 3 above and stage 4 if a further oral examination was required.

Once your corrections have been approved by the examiners and the Research Degrees Programme Management Team have been notified, you will receive an email from the Research Degrees Programme Management Team detailing the next steps. You should submit the final version of your thesis (i.e. the version of thesis as approved by the examiners following the viva voce examination and final corrections) to the University's repository managed by the Library. The version deposited should not include signatures and indicate the licence for all third party images. The Open Research team based in the Library will check if the thesis has been deposited correctly and that the restricting access form has been duly completed and signed, if applicable. Further information on restricting access to a thesis can be found under Thesis Submission on MySurrey. The Open Research team will inform the Research Degrees Programme Management Team once your e-thesis has been successfully deposited.

Your thesis will be openly available in the University's repository once your award is conferred. The University of Surrey is a designated public authority under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This Act gives a general right of access to all information held by the University, including theses, however, as stated above, under special circumstances you can request to restrict access to it.

Leavers form

You will be asked to complete a leavers form please ensure you complete that form . This will require your School input. This triggers part of your final stages and exit stage from your department.

Once completed and you have your supervisor's signature then submit the completed form to the Research degrees (Doctoral College) researchdegrees@surrey.ac.uk

14.7 Stage 7: Award

Awards are made at the end of each month and the award date will usually be the last working day of the month of the award (exceptions may occur in December and April due to holiday periods).

Due to the time it takes to check the thesis, including relevant datasets, has been uploaded correctly and to process the award details, you are advised to upload your thesis to the online repository as early in the month as possible.

- **It is unlikely that there will be time to carry out all the necessary checks if you upload your thesis later than noon on the 12th of the month** and your name will automatically be transferred to the following month's awards list if checks are not completed in time for the current month's awards.
- **Please also check when you upload your e-thesis that you have no remaining tuition fee payments to make, as your award cannot be conferred until all tuition fee debt has been cleared.**

You will receive an email, usually at the end of the awarding month, from the Research Degrees Programme Management Team once your award has been made and you will be asked to contact the Examinations team to either request collection or dispatch of the certificate. Your certificate and letter to confirm the award will be available to collect or will be posted, as you advise, 14 days following the date of award.

Your Surrey IT account and email address will close 90 days after the award so please remember to save any files currently in your Surrey folders that you want to keep. Please also update your personal email address via your Surrey Self Service.

The email from the research degrees programme management team will provide clear instructions and information pertaining to this stage of the process.

International PGRs

The Research Degrees Programme Management team cannot be held accountable if your award notification does not align with your visa expiry date and graduate visa application process.

Please contact International Student Advice team via Surrey Support for visa queries and conditions.

14.8 Stage 8: Graduation

Invitations to attend graduation ceremonies are sent to eligible PGRs via email to their university and personal accounts. For postgraduate ceremonies in April 2027 emails will be sent in December 2026. If you are awarded your degree in January or February 2027, you will be contacted by the ceremonies team soon after your award date. **February** is the cut-off month for the April graduation ceremony. PGRs whose awards are made in **March 2027** and beyond will be invited to the April 2028 ceremony. **Further details can be found at** Graduation | University of Surrey.

15. Other sources of advice and support

As well as your main sources of support mentioned throughout this document - your Supervisors, the Research Degrees Programme Management Team and Researcher Development and Employability team - there are several other services within the University that offer support and guidance to PGRs. Some of the key services are listed below with links to their webpages where you will find some helpful information on how to access and use the services on offer.

15.1 The University Library

The Library, located at the heart of the Stag Hill campus and easily recognisable by its gold and glass exterior, is home to an extensive range of information resources including printed volumes, multi-media and audio-visual items, and to the University's Archives and Special Collections. In addition, available via the library website, researchers have access to significant online collections

including a growing collection e-books, journal articles, digital archives of primary resources and hundreds of subject specialist databases.

The Library is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week during semester and 08:00-midnight during the vacation periods. This building is well equipped with over 400 PCs and docking stations, loanable laptops and is wirelessly enabled throughout. The Library provides a varied study environment with 1,600 study spaces which include group and silent study areas, bookable group study rooms, and self-service printing, scanning and copying. Specifically, for the University's PGR community, Level 5 of the Library provides a designated Researcher Zone, comprising training facilities, formal and informal meeting spaces and a silent study area. Level 5 is also home to the Doctoral College which includes the Research Degrees Programme Management team (RDPM) the Researcher Development and Employability team and the PGR Lifecycle Systems team

Library and Learning Services provide a welcome video for all new students and a series of video "How to" guides on various aspects of using library services.

Library and Learning Services also provides specialist support on the information seeking and publications activity of researchers. Your Faculty Librarian can provide you with one to one support in your discipline area with in-depth help in effectively searching for information for general research, systematic and scoping reviews, reference management software and analysing your results to identify impact and trends. The Open Research team offers specialist support to help you manage, publish, and disseminate your research publications and data as well as assess your research performance using responsible metrics (the team are available at openresearch@surrey.ac.uk). Further information including contact details for your Faculty Librarian are available on the Library Research Hub.

15.2 The Postgraduate Society

Postgrad Society is a student-led society for all research and taught postgraduate students which works to build an active, supportive, and inclusive postgrad community. The Society works closely with the Students' Union and University to ensure PGRs representation and the availability of both academic and pastoral support. With our social events, we aim to provide something for everyone, from quiz nights to Roller Discos or picnics, plus we're always open to new ideas!

Examples of past events include:

- BBQs
- Brewery tours
- Ice skating
- Film evenings

Throughout the year, we also coordinate opportunities for PGRs to help shape their experience, which we advertise across the University. For more information, get in touch at ussu.pgs@surrey.ac.uk or find us on Facebook (/SurreyPostgrads), Twitter (@SurreyPostgrads). The society is open to all but to join our mailing list, please register through the Union website at Clubs and Societies – University of Surrey Students' Union (ussu.co.uk).

15.3 The Students' Union

The University of Surrey Students' Union (USSU) is an independent charity that supports and represents the views of all students across the University. The Union is run by five, full-time elected Sabbatical Officers ('Sabbs'), who lead four Zones – Activity, Community, Support and Voice – with the support of Union staff and part-time Officers. The Union offers impartial, independent academic advice for all students, and represents PGRs at the highest levels within both the Doctoral College and throughout the University.

Alongside over 160 Students' Union societies and sports clubs (including the Postgrad Society), the Union runs a 'Get Involved' programme which you can collect from the Students' Union building or keep track of events via the Facebook page. Activities include everything from trips to iconic British towns and cities, to more adventurous European travel at discounted rates and smaller one-off activities such as mocktail making, pizza nights and an open-air cinema.

The Students' Union works in partnership with the University to run the Course Rep system, and every doctoral programme has a PGR Representative who is elected to represent the views of others on the course. PGR Reps also have the opportunity to participate in the validation process to approve new programmes or review existing ones, which is great experience for PGRs interested in a career in HE.

For PGRs keen to get involved with the local community, the Students' Union advertises a range of volunteering opportunities at www.surreyvolunteering.com. PGRs can also become Community Reps, who work to enhance the local community and increase PGR involvement at resident meetings and other events.

PGRs can also get involved with the Student Equality Network which provides a space to raise issues and help shape positive change around equality, diversity and inclusion at Surrey. The Network includes dedicated subnetworks for International Students, Race Equality, and Disability & Neurodiversity. PGRs can also get involved in awareness campaigns and events as part of the Network.

Useful contacts:

- General information: https://ussu.co.uk/
- Enquiries: ussu.information@surrey.ac.uk
- Academic advice: ussu.advice@surrey.ac.uk
- Course Rep Coordinator: saffron.cutts@surrey.ac.uk

15.4 Disability and Neuroinclusion

The D&N team provides confidential advice and assistance to PGRs across a range of support, including but not exclusively, implementing reasonable adjustments, advising on access to external funded support via the Disabled Students Allowance or equivalent, and guidance in exploring a diagnosis of a Specific Learning Difference, ADHD or Autism. To contact D&N please use this link: https://support.surrey.ac.uk/. For adaptations to study space, PGRs should contact their supervisor so that an Occupational Health assessment can be carried out.

Further details can be found here: https://www.surrey.ac.uk/disability-neurodiversity/services-and-support

15.5 MySurrey Hive

MySurrey Hive (Stag Hill and Manor Park campus) is a central point for queries related to your student life. The Hive Assistants can advise on a range of university-related points themselves, and are also the first point of contact to reach the following specialist teams::

- Student Receivables: Help with tuition fees, payments and account queries.
- Student Money Advice: Support with budgeting and managing your finances.
- International Student Advice: Help with visa and immigration guidance.
- Student Support Coordinators (via referral): Tailored support for complex or ongoing challenges affecting studies.

The team also hold and deliver knowledge on behalf of many other specialist university teams, for example Disability & Neuroinclusion or Accommodation, and are well placed to either answer your query directly or make a referral where necessary.

While the team are happy to support in answering questions, we do encourage students to look online through the MySurrey Webpages, or MySurrey Help, first. Often, these resources will have the answer to your query, meaning you can find out what you need to without needing to get in touch. However, if you can't see the information you're after, or just want some human guidance, please do get in touch.

The team can also be reached via:

- Phone call: Weekdays 09:30 – 16:30
  - 01483 983952
- Live Chat: Weekdays 09:30 – 16:30
  - Available through any MySurrey webpage
- Surrey Support, our online query portal: Any time; the team will respond as soon as they are able to.

Further details can be found here: https://my.surrey.ac.uk/hive

15.6 Health and Wellbeing

The University prides itself on the range and quality of its services to support all aspects of your health, wellbeing and personal development. The Health Centre, Student Wellbeing Services and Chaplaincy service are here to help you.

Support Services include: -

- **Centre for Wellbeing** a free, confidential counselling service that all students can access during their time studying at the University of Surrey. The service is made up of a team of highly trained counsellors, mental health practitioners and an eating disorder therapist who support students with a wide range of diagnoses and presenting issues. If you wish to access the Centre for Wellbeing, you can complete a registration form here. Once you have completed a registration form, you will be sent a link to book an appointment at a time that suits you. Appointments are offered face to face at the Centre for Wellbeing on Stag Hill Campus, or

remotely via Teams, telephone, or email. The Centre for Wellbeing is open Monday-Friday 8am-5pm.

- **Disability and Neuroinclusion** a free, service for students with a diagnosed disability, specific learning difficulty or neurodivergent diagnosis to support with practical adjustments around exams, mentoring, Disabled Students Allowance advice, and more. To contact the D&N team, you can send them a ticket using Surrey Support.
- **ThriveWell Wellbeing Advisors** – ThriveWell are a team of Student Wellbeing Advisors, who strive to create a thriving and inclusive environment where every student can flourish academically, personally and socially. The ThriveWell team offers one-on-one support, workshops and outreach activities with the goal toempower students to develop coping strategies, build resilience and access appropriate support services. To learn more about ThriveWell and book an appointment, **click** here
- **Health Assured Student Assistance Programme (SAP) –** A free, 24/7, 365 days a year counselling phoneline that students can contact for emotional support. Call them on 0800 0283766.
- **Student Health Centre** – an NHS GP practice located on Stag Hill Campus, making it easy for all students to access healthcare whilst they are studying. We encourage students residing on campus or in the local community to register with a local GP practice to ensure that when you need medical attention, you can do so in a timely manner. To register at Guildowns Student Health Centre, click here
- **Wisdom Wellbeing App –** An app free to all students to promote wellbeing, positive mental health and healthy lifestyles. Within the app you can find breathing and mindfulness exercises, podcasts, webinars, healthy lifestyle advice and an interactive daily mood tracker. Download the app for free and use code **MHA268152** to get started.
- **Report + Support,** You can use the University's online Report + Support tool to log an incident (see the above link for a list of incidents). You can report named or anonymously for a range of incidents including – bullying, harassment, sexual misconduct, hate crime, physical assault, discrimination, mental health and wellbeing, relationship abuse, stalking and issues relating to substance use or addiction. We will investigate everything that is reported and work with you to ensure that appropriate investigations and actions are taken.

- **24/7 Campus Safety team:** Our dedicated Campus Safety team is available around the clock, every day of the year, including weekends, bank holidays, and University closures. We ensure a safe environment across all residential and campus areas. You can contact them on 01483 682002 OR 01483 683333 in an emergency.

Further details can be found here: https://www.surrey.ac.uk/student-support/health-and-wellbeing

16. Making an appeal or complaint

If you wish to make an appeal against a decision or a complaint about your learning opportunities you should refer to the OSCAR webpages which provide information on the procedure and where to find help and support.

Where a PGR has an issue it is important to try and resolve this at a local level with the supervisors, the PGRD or the Associate Dean for an early resolution. Please refer to the Code of Practice for research degrees which sets out the process for local resolution of issues. If you need further advice, contact the Doctoral College Research Degrees Programme Management Team.

Appendix 1: Student Policies and Regulations

The latest versions of Student Policies and Regulations are available here.

Appendix 2: Dual Degree programmes

Currently the university has a number of dual degree programmes operating within faculties including:
University of Wollongong
Hong Kong Polytechnic University (HKPU)
Nankai University
University of Sao Paulo (UOP)

PGRs on a dual degree programme will each have an Individual Training Agreement (ITA) which details their location for each year of study as well as supervisory arrangements and contact information. It is very helpful if the Research Degrees Programme Management Team has a copy of each PGR's ITA so that they can provide the appropriate support at each stage of the research programme.

For any queries, please discuss with your supervisor and contact your Research Degrees Programme Management Team for bespoke arrangements for Confirmation, Exam Panel appointments and the *viva voce* process.

Appendix 3: PGR Lifecycle Diagram

From Application to Award: The PGR Lifecycle

