



The Graduate School

Circumstances in which a Postgraduate Researcher may be required to withdraw.

1.	<p>Withdrawal of registration may be initiated by the PG researcher (PGR) or the University, see PGR Regulations PGR4.3.1R – 4.4.1R. Circumstances in which a PGR may be withdrawn include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Successful completion of the award for which the PGR is registered;• Insufficient Academic Progress at:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Project Confirmation (RD1)○ Progression examination (RD2)○ Progress review points (PR2/PR3/PR4)○ Other points in the research programme identified by the Director of Studies/Supervisory Team in the context of routine supervision○ Final examination/viva outcome;• Personal circumstances;• Loss of contact with the Supervisory Team;• The project or its supervision is no longer viable• Non-payment of fees;• Academic/research misconduct;
2.	Academic Progress
2.1	<p>The primary purpose of supervision is to support PGRs in the successful completion of their programme of research. Within the context of routine supervision Directors of Studies/Supervisors exercise academic judgement to monitor progress and will provide feedback to the PGR both formally and informally about their assessment of ongoing performance. PGR progress is also measured and monitored through a number of mechanisms required under the University's regulations including the progression examination and formal progress review. The requirements for supervision are set out at section 11 of the University's PGR Code of Practice and the Graduate School Handbook Chapter 8.</p>
2.2	<p>Satisfactory progress must be maintained throughout the programme of research study; should a PGR fail to demonstrate the required level of timely academic achievement the Director of Studies/Supervisor will ensure that the PGR has sufficient opportunity, advice and guidance to help them remedy the situation before formal procedures are invoked. Continued unsatisfactory performance over a sustained period of time however, will lead to the PGR's registration being terminated by the University and the individual being required to withdraw.</p>
3.	Withdrawal during stage one: project confirmation (PGR Regulations Part 9.) or following the progression examination (PGR Regulations Part 11)

3.1	<p>Project Confirmation (RD1)</p> <p>At project confirmation the RD1 report must demonstrate that the project proposed and the methodology, research governance and supervision arrangements are appropriate and viable for study at Doctoral/MPhil level. PGRs must gain RD1 approval to be able to continue with their research degree. RD1 reports are considered by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee (FRDC)</p>
3.2	<p>Where the FRDC considers that the RD1 submission is unsatisfactory, the PGR will receive written feedback and will have one opportunity to rework and resubmit the report (PGR9.2.3R). If the resubmitted report remains unsatisfactory the PGR will be recommended for withdrawal from the award. No further resubmission opportunity is available (PGR9.2.5R).</p>
3.3	<p>Progression Examination</p> <p>The progression examination is intended to combine an assessment of the formulation and planning of the research programme with an evaluation of progress to date and of the suitability of the project as a basis for the research degree for which the PGR is registered. PGR Academic Regulations at Part 11 provide detail on the content, format and conduct of the progression examination; assessment criteria are outlined at PGR11.1.4.</p>
3.4	<p>Outcome recommendations available to the independent reviewers for the progression examination following the viva voce are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass – continuation of registration; • Fail – withdrawal of registration; <p>Exceptionally the reviewers may recommend a resubmission outcome, but there is no automatic right to resubmission at progression examination.</p> <p>Resubmission is not an available outcome for those PGRs whose initial registration date falls before 1 October 2013.</p>
3.5	<p>The reviewers will agree a joint recommended outcome and written report for consideration by the Faculty Research Degrees Committee (FRDC) who will agree the outcome decision. Where the decision is that the candidate has <u>failed the progression examination</u> the FRDC will write to the Research Degrees Award Board recommending that the PGR be withdrawn from the award. In such cases it is important that the Award Board acts promptly in reaching its decision so that the PGR is left in no doubt about the impact of the progression exam outcome upon their registration and Chair’s action may be appropriate to this end.</p>
4.	<p>Withdrawal following failure to demonstrate satisfactory progress at subsequent progress review points stages 2 and 3 (PGR Regulations part 12).</p>
4.1	<p>The focus of progress review in the stages of registration subsequent to the progression examination is to ensure that adequate progress on the research programme is being maintained and that supervisory support remains appropriate. Successful completion of progress review is a pre-requisite for continuation of registration on the research programme.</p>

4.2	Where progress remains unsatisfactory even after resubmission, the FRDC will recommend to the Award Board that the PGR is withdrawn from the University and their registration terminated.
5.	Withdrawal due to continued unsatisfactory progress during the context of routine supervision
5.1	If it becomes evident at any point during the year that there are significant problems with a PGR's progress or engagement with their studies the Director of Studies/Supervisor will raise their concerns with the PGR in the context of regular supervision and agree in writing realistic objectives within the project plan to bring progress back on track. It is not necessary to wait for formal progress review to deal with such problems. Concerns about progress may include but are not limited to: failure to meet agreed deadlines, failure to produce work of a suitable standard, or failure to attend supervisory meetings or engage with the supervisory process.
5.2	Where problems are the result of personal circumstances such as serious illness the Director of Studies/Supervisor should explore with the PGR whether a suspension of registration may be appropriate and make application in accordance with PGR Academic Procedures at PGR7.4 and published PGR Personal Circumstances guidance .
5.3	However, should there be a continued lack of progress without good reason or cause the Director of Studies/Supervisor should bring the matter to the attention of the FRDC who will consider what action the PGR must take to remedy the situation together with a reasonable timescale in which this must be achieved. The FRDC will then write to the PGR informing them of the nature of the concern, the work required and warning that failure to comply will result in the recommendation that his or her registration be withdrawn by the University. Failure to comply with the FRDC's requirements without good reason will lead to a recommendation to the Research Degrees Award Board that the PGR is withdrawn.
6.	Withdrawal following the outcome of the final examination and viva (PGR Regulations Part 14)
6.1	The range of recommended outcomes available to the examiners following the viva voce examination is listed at section PGR14.6.1R of the PGR Academic Regulations . Where the examiners recommend that the PGR candidate is not awarded the degree and should not be permitted to be re-examined, or where following the resubmission of a thesis for re-examination the examiners recommend that no degree should not be awarded, they will prepare an agreed statement of the deficiencies of the thesis or collection of published work and the reason for their recommendations to be forwarded to the Officer to the Research Degrees Award Board for consideration by the Board. This is a very rare occurrence.
6.2	Where a PGR candidate has been awarded the degree subject to corrections or amendments (major or minor), or has been permitted to re-submit for the degree with or without viva and does not submit satisfactory amendments or resubmit the thesis within the time allowed within the <i>PGR Academic Regulations at section 14.6.1R</i> , and/or <i>PGR14.8.1R</i> , the Award Board may decide to fail the candidate and require them to withdraw.

7.	Withdrawal due to personal circumstances: self-elected withdrawal
7.1	Occasionally it may be necessary for a PGR to withdraw from their programme of research due to personal circumstances which cannot be mitigated by a period of suspension or other forms of support. Where this is the case the PGR must complete withdrawal form RD8 which is submitted to the FRDC to note and recommendation to the Research Degrees Award Board for confirmation.
8.	Withdrawal due to loss of contact with the Supervisory Team
8.1	Where a PGR fails to attend supervisory meetings and/or repeatedly fails to respond to all reasonable efforts to make contact by their Director of Studies/Supervisor they may be considered for withdrawal by the Award Board on the recommendation of the FRDC. Prior to any recommendation being made the FRDC will write to the PGR to advise them that continued lack of communication will result in termination of their registration.
9.	Withdrawal when the project or its supervision is no longer viable
9.1	<p>Very occasionally a Faculty's ability to continue to supervise a PGR may change and no longer be viable. This situation can arise:</p> <p>i) when there has been an extended break in work on the project such that the research itself is no longer current and the project cannot be adjusted to remain relevant. PGRs returning to study after a break of 12 months or more (excepting return after maternity leave) will need to establish the ongoing currency of their project through discussion with their Director of Studies;</p> <p>ii) when the direction or topic area of the PGR's research project has changed to such an extent that the Department/Faculty does not have appropriate subject expertise within its staff to continue to supervise the project and no alternative arrangements can be made;</p> <p>iii) where a PGR requests a change of supervisor and either no suitable alternative can be identified, or the PGR refuses to accept the alternative supervision arrangements that are offered;</p> <p>iv) where a key member of the supervisory team retires or leaves the University and no suitable member of staff can be identified to act as Director of Studies (DoS), or to provide necessary subject expertise.</p>
9.2	In all such cases the Department/Faculty should consider all reasonable alternative avenues for supervision within and outside the Faculty before proposing the withdrawal of the PGR's registration. This may include <u>but is not limited to</u> : the possibility of a PGR transferring to another institution to follow a DoS who has moved there, or the appointment of an experienced UWE DoS who may not be a subject expert but where subject expertise can be provided by an external second supervisor.
10.	Withdrawal due to non-payment of fees

10.1	The University may withhold awards from PGR candidates who have outstanding obligations to the University and this includes the non-payment of fees. The University's tuition fees policy provides further guidance.
11.	Withdrawal due to proven academic misconduct
11.1	<u>Academic misconduct during the research programme</u> Where a PGR is suspected of having committed an assessment offence during the course of his or her research programme e.g. plagiarism or other form of academic misconduct e.g. the falsification of research results, the Director of Studies/Supervisor will contact both the Graduate School Officer and the Chair of the Faculty Research Degrees Committee who will investigate whether there is a case to answer and the nature and extent of the offence in accordance with PGR Academic Regulations at Part 15 .
11.2	<u>Academic misconduct in the context of the final examination and viva</u> Where any member of the examining panel suspects that an assessment offence has been committed within the context of the final examination they must contact a PGR Assessment Manager within the Graduate School as soon as possible prior to the date of the viva who will set in motion investigative procedures in accordance with Academic Regulations at PGR15. The viva may be delayed if necessary.
11.3	<u>The role of the Award Board</u> Where, following the investigative process, a PGR candidate is found to have committed an assessment offence the Award Board will decide either to take no further action or to impose an appropriate penalty which may include failing the PGR candidate and determining whether or not they should be permitted to re-register for future study with the University at doctoral level. In the most serious cases the Research Degrees Award Board may decide to fail the PGR candidate without the opportunity for assessment, or resubmission or re-registration for further doctoral study resulting in the candidate being required to withdraw.
12.	Appeal against the decision of the Award Board
12.1	PGR candidates may appeal against the decision of the Research Degrees Award Board on limited grounds only in accordance with the Academic Regulations at Part S . An appeal against a decision of the Board on the basis of a disagreement with the academic judgement of the examiners is not permitted. Further information about submitting an academic appeal is available on the University Academic Advice webpages .
13.	Automatic voluntary withdrawal at the end of registration
13.1	Where a PGR reaches the maximum end date of registration and has not submitted a thesis for the final assessment or had an application for an extension to the registration period approved, the FRDC will notify the Award Board that the PGR has voluntarily withdrawn from the PGR award.

BJH Graduate School
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