Research Degrees: Termination of Candidature

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* The University has adopted the principles of Designing for Diverse Learners, and all policy documents should be written with reference to these principles. Further information is available at the [Designing for diverse learners website](https://designingfordiverselearners.info/).
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Research Degrees: Termination of Candidature

# INTRODUCTION

* 1. This document sets out the procedure to be followed in circumstances where an Academic Unit (Department, School, Institute or Faculty) wishes to recommend to Research Degrees Committee (RDC) that a research degree candidate’s programme of study be terminated for reasons other than the use of academic misconduct (including research misconduct).
  2. Where Academic Unit is referred to in this Code of Practice, it means the Department, School, Institute or Faculty that is most relevant under the circumstances.

1.3 This procedure applies to all candidates undertaking research degrees by thesis whether at Masters or doctoral level.

1.4 A candidate’s programme can be terminated under this procedure on the grounds of:

a) Unsatisfactory progress

1. Absence without good cause.
2. Failure to attend or submit records for supervisory meetings, mid-term reviews and annual monitoring progress reviews ,
3. Candidate failure to submit thesis, to resubmit revised thesis, to enrol or exceeding the maximum prescribed period of study

1.5 Allegations of academic misconduct must be dealt with in accordance with the regulations for academic misconduct.

# AUTHORITY

2.1 RDC is the final arbiter of the interpretation and application of this code of practice.

# Unsatisfactory Progress

3.1 Faculties must ensure that they implement the University’s 12 supervisions a year (for full-time PGRs) and six supervisions a year (for part-time) which includes a Mid-Year Monitoring (MYM) Review to be held in month 5 of each academic year, from the date of initial registration), in addition to an Annual Monitoring and Progression (AMP) meeting (to be held in month 9 of each academic year, from the date of initial registration) for all their postgraduate research students (PGRs).

3.2 In accordance with the programme regulations candidates for most research degrees at the University of Hull are required to undertake and pass Postgraduate Training Scheme (PGTS) modules as a core requirement of their research degree. If candidates fail to engage with the PGTS or do not pass the required modules, this also constitutes unsatisfactory progress.

3.3 If a PGR’s progress is deemed by the assessment panel, or supervisors to be unsatisfactory, the PGR must be issued with a Faculty Warning and required to attend an Emergency Progress Meeting. The PGR must be required to submit the work for the Emergency Progress Meeting one month (if full-time) or two months (if part-time) from the date of the Faculty Warning letter. The Emergency Progress Meeting must then take place within ten working days of the submission date of this work. If the PGR does not submit the requested work by the deadline given without an extension having been agreed then this should be considered an automatic fail.

3.4 If, following the Emergency Progress Meeting, the student’s progress is now deemed to be satisfactory, no further action is required. If, on the other hand, the student is deemed to have made no, or only partial progress, a second Emergency Progress meeting must be called, supported by a University Warning, clearly stating what further improvements must be made to the student’s work. If the PGR is in receipt of a scholarship this should be suspended. This must be clearly communicated to the student at the Emergency Progress Meeting.

3.5 The PGR must be required to submit all the work for the second Emergency Progress Meeting one month (if full-time) or two months (if part-time) from the date of the University Warning letter. The second Emergency Progress Meeting must then take place within ten working days of the submission date.

3.6 The outcome of Emergency Progress Meetings should be communicated to the Faculty and Doctoral College within 5 working days.

3.7 In such cases where there are additional considerations in place for disabilities on a PGR’s record then proper consideration should be given to this in the conduct of Annual Monitoring and Progress Reviews or Emergency Progress Meetings. This may include, but is not restricted to, reasonable adjustments to the timescales for submission of work for EPMs, appropriate and mutually agreed changes to the format of meetings, note taker of meeting etc.

3.8 Failure to attend, or to submit requested work for, a Mid-Year Monitoring, Annual Monitoring and Progress Review or an Emergency Meeting is an automatic fail as, by non-attendance or non-submission of written work, the candidate is not able to demonstrate satisfactory progress.

3.9 Where a student’s progress is deemed unsatisfactory following the Second Emergency Progress Meetings, one of the following options must be chosen:

1. Transfer to a Master’s programme (eg. M.Phil, M.Res, MSc, MA),
2. Recommendation of voluntary withdrawal from the doctoral programme,
3. Recommendation of Termination of Studies.

## Faculty Warning

3.10 The Faculty Warning letter must clearly state what further work is required of the PGR to bring progress up to a satisfactory standard and provide a period in which this can be achieved in line with the timescales given in 3.3.

3.11 The Faculty Warning must be issued by a Graduate Research Director who is an *ex officio* member of RDC. The Doctoral College must be informed when any Faculty Warnings are issued.

## University Warning

3.12 If a second Emergency Progress Meeting is required a request for a University Warning must be made to the Doctoral College by a Graduate Research Director who is an *ex officio* member of RDC, stating the grounds on which the Warning is based. The request must be accompanied by a copy of the Faculty Warning. Copies of the Warning must be provided to the candidate’s supervisors, Head of Academic Unit and Dean.

3.13 The Warning must include details of the work which the Academic Unit considers the candidate needs to undertake to bring progress up to a satisfactory standard and provide a period in which this can be achieved in line with the timescales given in 3.4.

3.14 The issuing of a University Warning must be reported to the next meeting of RDC.

## Termination of Candidature

3.15 A candidate’s programme of study must not be terminated unless the candidate has been issued with, and failed to satisfy the terms of, a University Warning issued in accordance with the procedure above.

3.16 Where a candidate continues not to demonstrate satisfactory progress - as defined in a University Warning - the Faculty must request termination, stating the grounds for termination, within 5 working days of the Second Emergency Meeting. The request must be made by a Graduate Research Director who is an *ex officio* member of RDC using the appropriate form.

3.17 A request for termination of candidature must be considered by the Graduate Research Director (GRD) designated by RDC (assisted by the Faculty as appropriate) who must interview the candidate (if available/possible) and should interview the candidate’s supervisors. If the GRD supports the request they must make a recommendation to the Chair of RDC.

3.18 Where the Chair considers that the candidate’s programme of study should be terminated the Secretary of RDC must inform the candidate in writing within five working days stating the reasons for the decision and the date on which it is effective. The Secretary must further inform the candidate of their right of appeal in accordance with the University’s regulations governing academic appeals. Copies of the termination must be provided to the Head of Academic Unit and Dean.

3.19 The termination of candidature must be reported to the next meeting of RDC**.**

## Transfer to Masters

3.20 Where a candidate for a PhD has received a University Warning in accordance with 3.11-3.13 above, and the Academic Unit considers that the candidate is making progress which indicates that they may be capable of achieving a Masters by Thesis, the Academic Unit may recommend that the candidate be transferred to Masters (normally an MPhil) as an alternative to termination of the programme of study. This may not be possible for a student studying on a Student visa. For PGRs in receipt of a University funded scholarship, supervisors should discuss the option of transferring to a Masters with the Doctoral College before this is agreed with the PGR.

3.21 Such recommendation must include such action as deemed necessary to enable the candidate to make satisfactory progress towards the Masters, and must be made to the GRD. On receipt of such a recommendation the Graduate Research Director must interview the candidate if available and should interview the candidate’s supervisors. If the Graduate Research Director supports the request they must make a recommendation to the Chair of RDC.

3.22 Where the Chair considers that the candidate should be transferred to the Masters the candidate must be informed in writing within three working days, stating the reasons for the decision. The Doctoral College, in consultation with the candidate and Academic Unit must ensure that the candidate’s registration is amended and the revised end of prescribed period of study confirmed in writing.

# Absence Without Good Cause

* 1. During the research period a candidate must meet with their supervisors no less than twelve times per year if full time and no less than six times if part time. This includes the MYM, but excludes the AMP. Such meetings must take place no more than two months apart (full time) or four months apart (part time). During the thesis finalisation period a candidate should meet with their supervisors no less than every other month if full time and no less than every 4 months if part time.

## Faculty Warning

4.2 Where a candidate fails to meet with their supervisors for more than the period specified above, and the Academic Unit has reasonable grounds for believing that the candidate has ceased to undertake their studies, the candidate should be issued with a Faculty Warning giving the candidate no fewer than two and no more than 20 working days within which to re-establish meaningful contact with their supervisors. The Faculty Warning must advise the candidate that if they are unable to continue temporarily they must discuss with the supervisors the option to suspend studies for an agreed period. To accompany the Faculty Warning, faculty colleagues/the supervisory team may wish to consider whether to raise a welfare concern.

4.3 The Faculty Warning must be issued by a Graduate Research Director who is an *ex officio* member of RDC.

## University Warning

4.4 Where the candidate fails to re-establish contact as required by the Faculty Warning a request for a University Warning must be made to the Doctoral College by a Graduate Research Director who is an *ex officio* member of RDC stating the grounds on which the Warning is based and providing a copy of the Faculty Warning. The University Warning must give the candidate no fewer than two and no more than 20 working days within which to re-establish meaningful contact with their supervisors. Copies of the Warning must be provided to the candidate’s supervisors, Head of Academic Unit and Dean of Faculty. If the PGR is in receipt of a scholarship this should be suspended.

4.5 The issuing of a University Warning must be reported to the next meeting of RDC.

## Termination of Candidature

4.6 A candidate’s programme of study must not be terminated unless the candidate has been issued with, and failed to satisfy the terms of, a University Warning issued in accordance with the procedure above.

4.7 Where a candidate has not complied with the terms of a University Warning the Academic Unit must request termination stating the grounds for termination. The request must be made by a Graduate Research Director who is an *ex officio* member of RDC.

4.8 A request for termination of candidature must be considered by the GRD designated by RDC who should interview the candidate if available and should interview the candidate’s supervisors. If the GRD supports the request they must make a recommendation to the chair of RDC.

4.9 Where the chair considers that the candidate’s programme of study should be terminated the secretary of RDC must inform the candidate in writing within five working days stating the reasons for the decision and the date on which it is effective. The Secretary must further inform the candidate of their right of appeal in accordance with the University’s regulations governing academic appeals and queries.

4.10 Copies of the termination of candidature must be provided to the Head of Academic Unit and Dean.

4.11 The termination of candidature must be reported to the next meeting of RDC.

# Failure to attend or submit records for supervisory meetings, mid-term reviews and annual monitoring progress reviews ,

## University’s Formal Progress Monitoring Process

* 1. A candidate must engage with the University’s Formal Progress Monitoring Process (formal supervisions, MYM and an AMP, each year of registration) and submit reports of formal meetings with their supervisors, no less than twelve times per year if full time, and no less than six times if part time.

## Departmental Warnings

5.2 A departmental warning will be issued when a PGR fails to complete the following:

1. To attend a scheduled supervisory meeting without giving adequate notice.
2. To submit reports for three consecutive scheduled monthly supervisory meetings.
3. To submit requested work for a supervisory meeting by the specified deadline without sufficient prior notice (a week as minimum).
4. To submit their completed MYM report within one month of the MYM meeting.
5. To submit their completed AMP meeting report within one month of the AMP meeting,

5.3 Before issuing a departmental warning the Academic Unit should first consider whether there are reasonable grounds for believing that the candidate has ceased to undertake their studies. If such grounds are found then the process in section 4 should be applied immediately.

5.4 For PGRs who receive a stipend from the University, the Departmental warning must include a notice that payments will be suspended if they do not fully comply with the terms of the Warning. The PGR must be given 10 working days to provide the missing report(s) or to attend a rescheduled supervisory meeting. If the PGR fails to comply then a Second Departmental Warning must be issued, and if they are in receipt of a stipend this should be suspended. The Second Warning should give the PGR a further 10 working days to comply.

5.5 If a PGR does not attend or fails to submit work for a MYM or AMP meeting, without giving advance notice (a week as minimum), this will automatically result in failure of the MYM or AMP. Such cases should be considered under Section 3: UNSATISFACTORY PROGRESS, as above, and follow the course outlined there.

5.6 Where there is just cause for not being able to engage with the formal monitoring process, the GRD, Faculty, or Institute Research Office must be informed.

## Faculty Warning

5.7 In cases where the PGR fails to provide the requested supervision or progression meeting records following Departmental Warnings in 5.2 and 5.4 above, then the PGR should be issued with a Faculty Warning giving them no fewer than two and no more than 20 working days with which to provide the requested documents. The Faculty Warning must be issued by a Graduate Research Director who is an *ex officio* member of RDC.

5.8 Where it has become apparent that non-engagement with supervision and progression meetings is the issue, has exceeded the period specified above, and the Academic Unit has reasonable grounds for believing that the candidate has ceased to undertake their studies, a Faculty Warning should be issued under the processes for Section 4: Absence Without Good Cause, as above.

5.9 Staff providing administrative support to the Faculty or Institute Research Office will inform Heads of Department/Schools and GRDs when PGRs receive warnings so that the cause for concern can be followed up with the student and supervisor.

## University Warning

5.10 If a PGR continues to fail to submit missing records following a Faculty Warning then a request for a University Warning must be made to the Doctoral College by a Graduate Research Director who is an *ex officio* member of RDC, stating the grounds on which the Warning is based and providing a copy of the Faculty Warning. Copies of the Warning must be provided to the candidate’s supervisors, Head of Academic Unit and Dean of Faculty.

Failure to comply with the terms of the University Warning may result in the termination of the student’s programme of study.

5.11 Departmental warnings will expire after 12 months. Faculty and University Warnings will remain on the student’s record for the duration of their studies.

5.12 The issuing of a warning must be reported to the next meeting of RDC by the Secretary of the committee.

## Termination of candidature

5.13 A candidate’s programme of study must not be terminated unless the candidate has been issued with, and failed to satisfy the terms of, a University Warning issued in accordance with the procedure above.

5.14 Where a candidate has not complied with the terms of a University Warning the Academic Unit must request termination stating the grounds for termination. The request must be made by a Graduate Research Director who is an *ex officio* member of RDC.).

5.15 A request for termination of candidature must be considered by the GRD designated by RDC who should interview the candidate if available and should interview the candidate’s supervisors. If the GRD supports the request they must make a recommendation to the chair of RDC.

5.16 Where the Chair considers that the candidate’s programme of study should be terminated the Secretary of RDC must inform the candidate in writing within five working days stating the reasons for the decision and the date on which it is effective. The Secretary must further inform the candidate of their right of appeal in accordance with the University’s regulations governing academic appeals and queries.

5.17 Copies of the termination of candidature must be provided to the Head of Academic Unit and Dean.

5.18 The termination of candidature must be reported to the next meeting of RDC by the Secretary of the committee.

# Failure to submit thesis, to resubmit revised thesis, to enrol or exceeding the maximum prescribed period of study

## Failure to submit thesis or to resubmit revised thesis

* 1. Where a candidate has completed the prescribed period of study without submitting their thesis, or the specified period allowed for corrections or amendments after examination without resubmitting their revised thesis, and has not applied for an extension, or has fallen outside the period of an extension, including when extension requests have been rejected, the decision to terminate a candidate’s programme shall be made by the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee, who shall be the final arbiter, on the recommendation of the relevant Graduate Research Director.
  2. Where the chair considers that the candidate’s programme of study should be terminated the secretary of RDC must inform the candidate in writing within five working days stating the reasons for the decision and the date on which it is effective. The Secretary must further inform the candidate of their right of appeal in accordance with the University’s regulations governing academic appeals and queries.
  3. Copies of the termination of candidature must be provided to the Head of Academic Unit and Dean.
  4. The termination of candidature must be reported to the next meeting of RDC.

## Failure to Enrol

* 1. Where a candidate has failed to enrol by the latest start date set by the University, or by a deadline provided by the Research Degrees Committee, the University, (through the Research Degrees Committee), reserves the right to terminate a candidate’s programme. The decision shall be made by the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee, who shall be the final arbiter, on the recommendation of the relevant Graduate Research Director.
  2. Where the Chair considers that the candidate’s programme of study should be terminated the Secretary of RDC must inform the candidate in writing within five working days stating the reasons for the decision and the date on which it is effective. The Secretary must further inform the candidate of their right of appeal in accordance with the University’s regulations governing academic appeals and queries.
  3. Copies of the termination of candidature must be provided to the Head of Academic Unit and Dean.
  4. The termination of candidature must be reported to the next meeting of RDC.

## Exceeding the maximum prescribed period of study

* 1. The University reserves the right to immediately terminate the programme of study for any candidate who has exceeded the maximum period of registration as defined in the regulations of the relevant programme (see Programme Regulations here).
  2. The decision to terminate a candidate’s programme shall be made by the Chair of the Research Degrees Committee, who shall be the final arbiter, on the recommendation of the relevant Graduate Research Director.
  3. Where the Chair considers that the candidate’s programme of study should be terminated the Secretary of RDC must inform the candidate in writing within five working days stating the reasons for the decision and the date on which it is effective. The Secretary must further inform the candidate of their right of appeal in accordance with the University’s regulations governing academic appeals and queries.
  4. Copies of the termination of candidature must be provided to the Head of Academic Unit and Dean.
  5. The termination of candidature must be reported to the next meeting of RDC by the Secretary of the committee.

# Version Control

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| **Version** | **Author** | **Date approved** | **Relevant sections** |
| V1 09 | Lisa Tees | **NA** | Migrated to new template |
| V2 00 | Doctoral College | Oct 2021 | Adds section 5: FAILURE TO SUBMIT SUPERVISORY MEETING, MID-TERM REVIEW AND ANNUAL MONITORING PROCESS RECORDS, OR ATTEND THE MEETINGS |
| V2 01 | Doctoral College | Sept 2022 | Section 1.1 and 1.2 explains what an Academic Unit means  Adds in 1.3 FAILURE TO SUBMIT SUPERVISORY MEETING, MID-TERM REVIEW AND ANNUAL MONITORING PROCESS RECORDS, OR ATTEND THE MEETINGS  Section 3.1. Clarifies the number of supervisory meetings for part-time PGRs, and clarifies that supervisory meetings are in addition to the AMP, but include the MYM.  Section 3.1 Changes Academic Unit Warning to Faculty Warning  Student changed to PGR throughout the document  3.5: changes Head of Academic Unit to Head of Department, School or Institute.  3.10: substitutes GRD for PGRD  3.13 Transfer to Masters. Additional text inserted: For PGRs in receipt of a University funded scholarship, supervisors should discuss the option of transferring to a Masters before this is agreed with the PGR.  4.1 clarification that the number of supervisory meetings that PGRs are required to attend each year includes the MYM, but excludes the AMP  Section 5.1 Addition of sub-headings Supervisory meetings; Mid-Year Monitoring (MYM) and Annual Monitoring and Progression (AMP) for clarification  5.1 Changes 6-month review to MYM and Annual Monitoring Process to AMP  5.1 a) changed wording so that the first Department Warning includes a warning to PGRs in receipt of a scholarship will receive a warning that their stipend will be stopped.  5.1 a) Stipend to be stopped after second Departmental Warning  5.1 b) changed to make consistent with 5.1 a)  5.1 c) clarified that paperwork should be received within one month of the AMP meeting taking place.  5.1 c) changed to ensure consistency of process with 5.1 a)  5.1 d) added that failure to attend AMP without prior notice automatically results in failure of AMP and Faculty Warning.  5.1 e) amended to ensure consistency of process with 5. a) and b)  5.1 f) GRD substituted for PGR Director.  5.4 Escalation: section amended to ensure consistency with process and removal of second Faculty Warning.  5.4, 5.5, 5.6, 5.8: removal of reference Institute Warning  5.7 GRD substituted for Directors of PGR |
| V2 02 | Doctoral College | Jan 2023 | 3.1 Reduction of period between first EMP and second EMP from 3 months to 1 month for FT PGRs; and from 6 months to 2 months for PT PGRs.  3.3 Reduction of period for PGRs to bring progress up to standard following Faculty Warning from min. of 3 months to 1 month for FT PGRs; and from 6 months to 2 months for PT PGRs.  3.6 Reduction of period for PGRs to bring progress up to standard following University Warning from min. of 3 months to 1 month for FT PGRs; and from 6 months to 2 months for PT PGRs.  4.12 Amendment to regulation to allow Academic Units to request immediate termination for candidates who exceed the maximum period of study without requesting an extension. Removes requirement to wait a year.  5.9 Sentence amended to clarify that DC reports the issuing of university warnings to RDC.  5.15 Sentence amended to clarify that DC reports Termination to RDC. |
| V2 03 | Doctoral College | June 2023 | 1.4 c) sentence changes to lower case for uniformity.  Section 3 amended throughout to clarify timescales for submission of work for EMPs and Warnings, and to specify that GRDs must request Warnings and terminations.  3.2 adds notice that failure of core PGTS modules could be considered grounds for unsatisfactory progress.  4.2 Amended to reference Faculty Warning.  4.3-4 Amended to specify that GRD must issue Faculty Warnings and request University Warnings. Timescales for Warnings also clarified.  Section 5 restructured to ensure clarity in the various routes to termination described in this section and the role of the GRD in issuing and requesting Warnings.  Section 6 added in entirety. |
| V2 04 | Doctoral College | May 2024 | 1.4d addition of section title to list and change of name.  1.6 Housekeeping sentence added, confirming correspondence with candidates will be via email, in line with Student Contract.  3.7 Additional clause added to allow for reasonable adjustments in the conduct of AMPs and EPMs for disabled PGRs. All following clause numbers changed as result.  4.1 Changed to highlight requirement for 12 supervision meetings for FT and 6 for PT is during research period of degree, and that during the thesis finalisation period the number of meetings should be no less than every other month if full time and every 4 months if part time.  4.2 Staff asked to consider whether a welfare concern should accompany a Faculty warning.  4.4; 4.7 change made to clarify that only GRD’s serving as ex officio members of RDC can request University Warnings.  5.3 Clause inserted to ask staff to consider whether PGR should be warned under Absence Without Good Cause route rather than Failure to submit records. Subsequent clause numbers changed to reflect new clause.  5.4 Time PGRs have to comply with warnings changed from 20 days to 10.  5.8 Sentence reworded.  6 Title of section changed to place emphasis on failure to submit thesis by deadline.  6.1 Changed to reflect amendment to process so that Chair of RDC nominates PGR for possible termination rather than Faculty, and also to make clear rejection of extension request may lead to termination.  6.6 Removal of Head of Academic Unit from recommendation process. |
| V 2.05 | Doctoral College | July 2024 | 1.4 c) and d) changed to reflect amendments to titles of sections.  3.8 failure to attend or submit work for MYM now to result in automatic fail and Unsatisfactory Progress processes, in like manner to AMP.  4.4 removal of sub clause g) as repeats sub clause c).  5.2 d) Failure to attend MYM removed as grounds for Departmental Warning.    5.4 removal of reference of MYM from clause.  5.5 MYM added to AMP as grounds for automatic fail and triggering of unsatisfactory progress procedures.  6.5-6.8 Addition of new clauses to section 6 covering termination on the basis of failure to enrol. |