Departmental Regulations - PhD Students

These Departmental Regulations aim to assist students and supervisors, to promote training and achievement, and to ensure that targets are met within the appropriate schedule.

The rules should be read in conjunction with the Code of Practice for Graduate Research Degrees from the Board of Graduate Studies. The rules are in addition to the rules and regulations laid down by the University and its offices and your College.

1. All PhD students are expected to submit their thesis within four years. Failure to meet this target may result in studentships being withheld from the Department; this would be detrimental both to the Department and potential PhD students. PhD students are advised that, if they fail to submit by four years, then their continuance on the register will only be supported in very exceptional circumstances agreed by the Head of Department in consultation with the DGEC. The default position will be removal from the Register. Students should consult the Code of Practice for full details of the implications of this action. PhD Students will be advised from the outset the period of their experimental and observational work. This will normally be three years, but for some awards it will be four. Students on three year courses are expected to complete their project work within three years and only exceptionally to extend work into the fourth year.

2. Supervisors must take all reasonable steps in advance to ensure that a project is feasible and can be completed within the appropriate research timescale, and that the required facilities and funding will be available. Supervisors are also expected to discuss progress with the student at formal meetings at least once a month.

3. For PhD students on three year awards, facilities for experimental and observational work will be withdrawn at the end of three years; after this a PhD student will thereafter only be permitted access to desk space and use of general departmental facilities. This rule may be varied by the Head of Department in consultation with the Departmental Graduate Education Committee (DGEC) if the student can convince that Committee of the need for such further work. Those students with four year awards may continue for a further six months beyond their three year limit. Students should allow at least six months for writing up and submission.

4. The Department will consider withholding studentships from supervisors whose PhD students consistently fail to submit within four years.

5. Training in specific and transferable skills is a requisite part of postgraduate study and is recorded in the Student Log. There is a range of relevant courses run by the Department, Graduate School and University. Students are expected to identify, in consultation with their supervisor, a set of courses suitable for extending their current skills. The normal expectation for PhD students is to undertake 10 days training per annum in transferable skills.

6. All students will undergo a formal induction programme at the commencement of their studentship.

7. Feasibility Report: after 2 months the DGEC will receive from PhD students a short feasibility report. This report will include a statement confirming that the necessary facilities, funding and support are available. Such facilities would include, for example, finance, access to animals, equipment and field facilities. The report should also include a brief section outlining courses the student will attend to extend his/her skills. These choices should be discussed with the supervisor.
The student and supervisor will receive feedback on the report from the Committee.

8. **First Year Progress Report**: after **10 months** PhD students will write another report, outlining the progress made so far and describing objectives for the future. This will be read by the two advisors, who will then arrange a formal meeting with the student. The aim is to help by providing both written and oral feedback. The supervisor will then submit a report on the student’s progress via CGSRS, which will also be considered by the DGEC. On the basis of the reports by the supervisor and advisors, the Committee will recommend whether the student should be **registered for the degree of PhD**. Students can appeal to the Head of Department against decisions made by the Committee; should the Head of Department be the supervisor, then the case will be handled by a senior member of the Department.

9. **Second Year Progress Report**: after **2 years** PhD students submit to the DGEC a second progress report summarising achievements made to date, together with an outline of proposed thesis structure and timetable for future research. The supervisor will be informed of the Committee’s views and will formally discuss these with the student, who is also encouraged to meet with the advisors.

10. **Third Year ”Timetable to Submission“ Report**: after **3 years** PhD students submit to the DGEC a simple Gantt chart detailing their expected monthly achievements, together with a brief explanatory paragraph. The key aim is to demonstrate that there is a plan of when each chapter will be completed, and a clear idea of where the data will come from and what analysis is still required.

11. The DGEC may request further reports as it considers appropriate.

12. PhD Students will give at least one research talk per year in a situation in which they will receive feedback. Second year PhD students will give a Beer Talk. Third year students will take part in the Departmental Graduate Poster Competition.

13. The **10 month, 2nd year and 3rd year** PhD progress reports will be accompanied by a **Student Log** that lists achievements in accordance with guidelines prepared by the DGEC and endorsed by the Grad School. These reports should also set out courses that will be attended and the Log used to record this; the supervisor will comment on training in reports relating to student progress.

14. After **32 months (38 for 4 year students)** (i.e. 1 June if starting on 1 October) the Chair of the DGEC will approach the supervisor of a PhD student and ask for an expected submission date for the thesis.

15. All students are ultimately responsible for their own research activity, the quality of the submitted thesis and their candidacy for a degree.

16. Exemption to any part of these regulations on the grounds of exceptional circumstances may be given by the Head of Department, or, for the Head’s students, a senior member of the Department nominated by the DGEC. Exemption will be based on the recommendation of the Committee and supervisor, together with other relevant expertise as considered appropriate. In such circumstances the student will be allowed to present his/her case in person to the appropriate authority.

**Dr Andrea Manica, Chair, Departmental Graduate Education Committee. Revised October 2013.***