



**University of  
Leicester**



**Research Student Handbook -  
2010/2011**

**Graduate School**

**September 2010**

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## Welcome from the Graduate Dean

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Welcome to the University of Leicester Graduate School.

You are joining one of the UK's largest and most vibrant postgraduate communities and, along with over 1,200 other postgraduate researchers, you will benefit from being a member of a University that combines a strong and proven track record of successful postgraduate support together with an internationally regarded research reputation.

This Handbook will help you make the most of your time here and I hope it will be of value to you both now, as you start your degree, right through to your final year as you look towards submitting your thesis and sitting the viva examination. The Handbook describes the academic and other support services available to you as well as containing important administrative advice. There is also an introduction to the Graduate School's Researcher Development Training programmes through which you will develop the skills you need to become an effective researcher and successfully complete your degree together with transferable skills that will be of use both during your time at the University and in your career beyond.

You can find an electronic copy of this Handbook, together with much other useful information, on the Graduate School website:

► [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool)

Postgraduate researchers are encouraged to visit the website regularly as it is updated weekly with details of relevant University and external events, conferences, training courses, and other news.

I want your experience at the University of Leicester to be productive, successful, and enjoyable. I hope that this Handbook will help you as you explore the range of opportunities available to our postgraduate researchers - but if you have any questions about the information here, or have a suggestion for something we should include in future editions, please do get in touch. You can email the Graduate School at [graduatedean@le.ac.uk](mailto:graduatedean@le.ac.uk)

**Professor Sarah Hainsworth**  
Graduate Dean

We would welcome any comments/suggestions that you may have for improving this Handbook. Please email [graduatedean@le.ac.uk](mailto:graduatedean@le.ac.uk)

## Part One - Postgraduate Research at the University of Leicester

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This Handbook is your guide to the University's academic and administrative arrangements for postgraduate researchers. It provides a range of information that we hope will be of value to you. Part One describes your rights and responsibilities as a postgraduate researcher and gives a brief introduction to the postgraduate experience at the University of Leicester. Part Two describes the University's student support services while Part Three explains the purpose and scope of our Researcher Development Training structures and how these will support your personal and professional development. Finally, Parts Four and Five deal respectively with Administrative Matters and Writing and Submitting Your Thesis - important information which you should take careful note of.

### In this section ►

- 1.1 The Graduate School
- 1.2 Rights and Responsibilities
- 1.3 Life as a Postgraduate Researcher

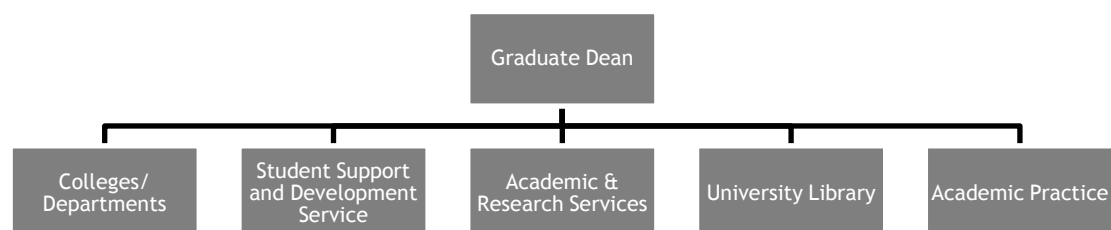
### 1.1 The Graduate School

The Graduate School provides an umbrella structure under which the postgraduate activity of the University is organised. The Graduate School has three main components:

- The Graduate Dean
- College Directors of Postgraduate Research
- Graduate Office

#### *The Graduate Dean*

The Graduate School is headed by the Graduate Dean, Professor Sarah Hainsworth. The Graduate Dean is a senior academic appointed to the post for three years and is the voice for postgraduate students on all major University committees. The Graduate Dean works with partners across the University to promote and deliver academic and support services for taught and research postgraduate students. Some of these links are illustrated below:



Additionally, the Graduate Dean provides the main contact point between the University and relevant external bodies such as the UK Council for Graduate Education, Vitae, etc.

## ***College Directors of Postgraduate Research***

Each College has a Director of Postgraduate Research who plays a key role in assisting the Graduate Dean and the Head of College in formulating and implementing policies and procedures relating to postgraduate researchers. The Director plays an important role in promulgating University policy at College level and ensures that there is effective communication between the Graduate School and the College.

You should know who your College's Director of Postgraduate Research is as they play a key role in your College's Researcher Development Training programme:

College	Director	Email
College of Arts, Humanities, and Law	Prof. Mark Bell	mb110@le.ac.uk
College of Medicine, Biological Sciences, and Psychology	Dr Peter Meacock	mea@le.ac.uk
College of Science and Engineering	Prof. Mike Warrington	emw@le.ac.uk
College of Social Science	Prof. Jo Brewis	jpb18@le.ac.uk

## ***The Graduate Office***

The Graduate Office deals with all administrative matters relating to registered postgraduate researchers. It is located on the ground floor of the Fielding Johnson Building and is open to visitors Mondays to Fridays from 09:30 to 16:00 - so you can call in if you require advice or information during the course of your studies. Many of the key administrative forms and documents used by the Graduate Office are also available online from the Graduate School website.

### **Graduate Office -**

▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/forms/research](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/forms/research)

Telephone 0116 252 2299/2293

Email [pgresearch@le.ac.uk](mailto:pgresearch@le.ac.uk)

## **1.2 Rights and Responsibilities**

All students are issued at registration with a copy of the University's *Regulations for Research Students*. You should read these carefully and retain them until the end of your degree. They include the award regulations for the University's research degrees together with regulations relating to admissions, registrations, and examinations. They also contain related policy statements including the Student Code of Social Responsibility and the Code of Student Discipline.

### **Regulations for Research Students -**

You can find the Regulations for Research Students online at:

▶ [www.le.ac.uk/academic/Regs/index.html](http://www.le.ac.uk/academic/Regs/index.html)

### ***Code of Practice for Research Degrees***

The University's Code of Practice for Research Degrees is referred to a number of times in this Handbook and is included in full in the Appendix. The Code applies to all students registered for a research degree regardless of mode of study or place of residence. It sets out what the University expects from both you and your supervisor and is a statement of the roles and responsibilities that you and your supervisor have.

It is important that you understand these roles and responsibilities and that you discuss them with your supervisor at the earliest opportunity to agree how these formal requirements will work for you in practice.

#### **Code of Practice for Research Degrees -**

You can find the Code of Practice for Research Degrees online at:

▶ [www.le.ac.uk/academic/Regs/index.html](http://www.le.ac.uk/academic/Regs/index.html)

### ***Code of Conduct for Research***

The University's primary functions of teaching and research involve a search for knowledge and the truthful recording of the findings of that research. Any action knowingly taken by a student which involves misrepresentation of the truth is an offence which the University believes should incur very severe penalties.

The attention of all students is drawn to the University's statement on academic dishonesty included in the *Regulations for Research Students*. If you have any concerns about how your work fits with this, please speak with your supervisor in the first instance.

It is the policy of the University of Leicester that all research under its auspices will be conducted responsibly and ethically. The University expects all members of its research community to be committed to high standards of professional conduct and believes that they have a duty to ensure that their work enhances the reputation and standing of the University and the profession to which they belong.

The University has adopted a Code of Conduct for Research and this provides guidelines for responsible practice in research as well as procedures for dealing with instances in which misconduct in research may have occurred. The Code applies to all members of the University's research community, including postgraduate researchers. You should ensure that you read the Code of Conduct for Research and speak with your supervisor if you have any questions regarding this.

#### **Code of Conduct for Research -**

You can find the Code of Research Conduct online at:

▶ [www.le.ac.uk/ua/re](http://www.le.ac.uk/ua/re)

## ***Code of Practice for Research Ethics***

From October 2007 any research that involves human participants needs to go through a formal process of research ethics review. Clearly this requirement is likely to affect researchers in some Schools/Departments more than in others, but is applicable throughout the University and to all members of the University's research community - including postgraduate researchers.

Student Development have published a study guide on research ethics for research involving human participants and all postgraduate researchers as appropriate are encouraged to spend some time reading this and discussing any applicable issues/concerns with their supervisor. You can find the study guide at:

► [www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/sd/pgrd/resources/ethics](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/sd/pgrd/resources/ethics)

Ethical approval is needed prior to commencement of all non-clinical research projects concerning human subjects and the University has adopted a Code of Practice for Research Ethics which provides the framework within which the ethical review process will operate across campus. You should ensure that you read the Code of Practice for Research Ethics and speak with your supervisor if you have any questions regarding this.

Code of Practice for Research Ethics -

You can find the Code of Practice for Research Ethics online at:

► [www2.le.ac.uk/institution/committees/research-ethics/code-of-practice](http://www2.le.ac.uk/institution/committees/research-ethics/code-of-practice)

## ***Equality of Opportunity***

Students and staff of the University are members of a single community, working in partnership to provide a research and learning environment in which all members are given the opportunity to realise their full potential. The University is committed to an equal opportunities policy which is designed to enable all its students to derive the maximum benefit from their studies.

A full statement on the University's approach to equality of opportunity is contained in its Student Charter included in the *Regulations for Research Students*. The Regulations also contain other relevant policies including the University's Statement Concerning Harassment and Discrimination and its Race Equality Policy.

## ***Health and Safety***

Your School/Department will familiarise you with your obligations with respect to health and safety and these will vary according to your discipline. In some disciplines there will be formal training sessions as part of your induction.

The attention of all postgraduate researchers is drawn to the University's Statement on Health and Safety included in the *Regulations for Research Students*.

## **Data Protection**

The Data Protection Act 1998 regulates the processing of personal data whether it is held on a computer or on manual files. You are allowed to process personal data only for use in connection with your research and where this is with the express permission of your Head of School/Department and is in accordance with any guidance or Code of Practice issued by the University.

The attention of all postgraduate researchers is drawn to the provisions regarding data protection contained in the *Regulations for Research Students*.

## **Complaints**

The University hopes that your experience as a postgraduate researcher will be rewarding. However, if something does go wrong you need to know what steps to take to resolve matters. If you are having problems it is important that you act quickly and discuss the matter with your supervisor as it is usually possible to put matters right without you losing valuable research time. If you feel that your research programme is not proceeding well and that this has not been resolved through discussion with your supervisor, you should raise the matter with your School/Department's Postgraduate Tutor and - if necessary - your Head of School/Department.

If after that matters are still not resolved, you may seek the advice of the Graduate Dean and, ultimately, you may make a formal complaint under the University's Complaints Procedure. These are explained in the *Regulations for Research Students*:

► [www.le.ac.uk/academic/Regs/index.html](http://www.le.ac.uk/academic/Regs/index.html)

Before making any complaint under this procedure, you should seek advice from the University of Leicester Students' Union Education Unit. You can contact the Education Unit on +44 (0)116 223 1228 or email [educationunit@le.ac.uk](mailto:educationunit@le.ac.uk)

## **1.3 Life as a Postgraduate Researcher**

Obviously everyone's experience is unique, but most people find that life as a postgraduate researcher is quite different to their other experiences of higher education. You may feel this particularly strongly if you are not familiar with the British education system. As a postgraduate researcher you will take far more responsibility for your own learning and need to develop a range of new skills and more independence. You will be helped to acquire some of these skills through the Researcher Development Training programmes run by your College and centrally. Further details about this are given in Part Three of this Handbook and in the *Guide to Researcher Development Training*.

You will probably also find that your relationship with academic staff is different. Your supervisor will help you to establish a structured approach to your research and will help you to plan, define goals, and set deadlines for the submission of work - but you will need to show determination and persistence and be willing to take the initiative. Most research students find that as they gain knowledge and confidence they are able to evaluate their work professionally and make real progress with their research.



## ***External Resources***

Postgraduate researchers who would like further general information about studying for a research degree and the wider doctoral community may like to explore some of the following external resources:

### ***Vitae***

Vitae is a national organisation championing the personal, professional, and career development of postgraduate researchers and research staff in higher education institutions and research institutes. For postgraduate researchers, they offer information and guidance on many aspects of your research degree - including planning, self-development, supervision, raising your profile, completing your degree, and planning your career.

- ▶ [www.vitae.ac.uk](http://www.vitae.ac.uk)

### ***Graduate Junction***

Graduate Junction has been created for all taught and research postgraduates and postdoctoral researchers from any discipline and any country. Graduate Junction aims to help early career researchers form networks not only with each other but also to forge links and engage with business, industry, and social enterprise.

- ▶ [www.graduatejunction.net](http://www.graduatejunction.net)

### ***Beyond the PhD***

Beyond the PhD has been developed primarily for postgraduate researchers in the arts and humanities, though researchers in other disciplines may also find it of use. It has information and resources to help you plan and take your first steps into a career beyond your research degree.

- ▶ [www.beyondthephd.co.uk](http://www.beyondthephd.co.uk)

### ***Piled Higher and Deeper - PhD***

Comics and other fun stuff for the postgraduate researcher.

- ▶ [www.phdcomics.com](http://www.phdcomics.com)

## ***Publications***

If you are interested in reading more about life as a postgraduate researcher there are an increasing number of publications aimed at research students. Three recent ones are:

- ▶ *How to Get a PhD*, by Estelle Phillips and D S Pugh (4<sup>th</sup> edition 2005)
- ▶ *The Research Student's Guide to Success*, by Pat Cryer (3<sup>rd</sup> edition 2006)
- ▶ *The Unwritten Rules of PhD Research*, by Gordon Rugg and Marian Petre (2<sup>nd</sup> edition 2010)

All texts are published by The Open University Press.

## Part Two - Academic and Other Support

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One of the Graduate School's main roles is to coordinate the various support services for postgraduate researchers provided right across the University. This includes academic support provision through your supervisor, postgraduate tutor, and thesis committee together with learning, careers, and pastoral support services available through providers such as Student Development, the Careers Service, and the Student Welfare Service.

This section of the Handbook will give you an idea of the range of support available to you together with useful links and contact information. There are also sections with advice on dedicated support services for students with a disability or long-term medical condition and international students.

### In this section ►

- 2.1 Academic Support
- 2.2 Learning Support
- 2.3 Careers Support
- 2.4 Pastoral Support
- 2.5 Support for Students with a Disability or Long-Term Medical Condition
- 2.6 Support for International Students

### 2.1 Academic Support

The University of Leicester is a major research university allowing you to benefit from working with staff at the cutting edge of their disciplines. The knowledge, expertise, and sense of innovation and discovery evident in our Schools/Departments create an excellent environment in which to undertake doctoral level studies.

#### *Supervisor*

Your supervisor(s) will be your first point of contact for help and advice. Your supervisor(s) will let you know what is expected of you - in particular, that your thesis should be your own work and that, within the supervisory framework, you are responsible for bringing forward and developing your own ideas. Your supervisor(s) will provide guidance on:

- the planning of your research programme
- using literature and sources
- requisite techniques (including arranging for training where necessary)

They will also monitor the progress of your research through regular consultations in accordance with departmental and University policy and in light of discussions or arrangements with you.

### ***Postgraduate Tutor***

Each School/Department has a Postgraduate Tutor who reports to the Head of School/Department and helps to coordinate local postgraduate support. Their specific responsibilities include:

- ▶ establishing and organising departmental progress monitoring procedures
- ▶ working with supervisors to ensure timely completion and thesis submission
- ▶ monitoring student participation in researcher development training
- ▶ overall pastoral care of research students

Your Postgraduate Tutor will be introduced as part of your School/Department's induction programme.

### ***Thesis Committee***

Schools/Departments are strongly encouraged to operate a thesis committee system for their postgraduate researchers or some equivalent method. A thesis committee is likely to include:

- ▶ your main supervisor - who carries primary responsibility for your supervision
- ▶ a second supervisor or advisor - who can offer further academic advice
- ▶ the departmental Postgraduate Tutor (or their nominee) - who is involved in monitoring your progress but is independent of the supervisory team

The advantage of the thesis committee system is that you have a single point of contact - the main supervisor - but there are also others who are familiar with your work and can support you and monitor your progress. For example, if your main supervisor is temporarily unable to continue supervising your work, the second supervisor or advisor can assume the role of main supervisor. This committee will usually meet with you twice each year to formally review your progress.

### ***University Library***

The University Library is a major research library, providing access to over a million printed volumes and a wide range of electronic journals and information resources via the web. It comprises the David Wilson Library, a five-storey building on the main campus, and the specialist Clinical Sciences Library at the University Hospital.

Research students can now also benefit from the Graduate School Reading Room in the David Wilson Library which is exclusive to postgraduates and offers a variety of formal and informal study spaces as well as group study rooms that can be booked only by postgraduate students. A PC Zone is reserved for postgraduates and wi-fi is available throughout the Library.

Other facilities for research students include:

- ▶ information librarians - specialist librarians providing detailed help and advice for your discipline
- ▶ Leicester Research Archive - a digital collection of research outputs from members of the University
- ▶ information skills training - online tutorials and workshops to help you refresh your information literacy
- ▶ document supply service - giving you access to materials from other libraries
- ▶ help for part-time/distance learners - dedicated resources and services for students on flexible research degree programmes

Library -

▶ [www.le.ac.uk/library](http://www.le.ac.uk/library)

Telephone 0116 252 2043

Email [libdesk@le.ac.uk](mailto:libdesk@le.ac.uk)

## 2.2 Learning Support

The Graduate School provides a University-wide framework of support for postgraduate researchers, helping them to achieve their potential. In addition to the sources of academic support described above, students can access learning support through Student Development and the University's computing facilities:

### *Student Development*

Student Development, part of the University's Student Support and Development Service, provides opportunities for the development of higher level learning skills appropriate to postgraduate researchers. Study guidance is readily available as and when you need it, introducing new skills as well as supporting the development of existing abilities. Services include a varied programme of workshops, enabling you to explore a specific skills area in depth through guided, discussion-based activities. The topics covered are wide-ranging, from designing conference posters to preparing for your viva examination. Written advice is also available in the form of an extensive range of free study guides covering essential topics in the areas of writing, presentation, numeracy, and study skills.

Student Development -

▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/sd](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/sd)

Telephone 0116 252 2004

Email [sdzhelpdesk@le.ac.uk](mailto:sdzhelpdesk@le.ac.uk)

## **Computing Facilities**

We have around 1,400 computers in use at the University. Most of these PCs are available in the designated computer user areas in our teaching buildings and some can be found in departmental computer rooms. A few Schools/Departments also make use of Apple Macintosh computers. In addition you will have access to the computers in a dedicated PC Zone in the David Wilson Library that is reserved for staff and postgraduate students. Access is available 24 hours a day and at weekends to some computers via a card-access system.

If you have your own laptop you can connect it to the University's wi-fi service from one of the many hotspots available on campus. Your laptop must be suitably configured and you will need your University computer account details. The wi-fi network provides you with access to a number of our web-based services, including your University email.

We have a dedicated team of support staff in IT Services who will be only too pleased to offer you help and advice should you have any IT problems or queries. There is a single point of contact for requesting IT support and we use a tracking system so that, if necessary, you can follow the progress of your request.

### **IT Services -**

▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/offices/itservices](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/itservices)

Telephone 0116 252 2253

Email [ithelp@le.ac.uk](mailto:ithelp@le.ac.uk)

## **2.3 Careers Service**

A postgraduate qualification is an investment in your future. Like you, we are keen that your investment pays off. Leicester graduates have a strong employment record. A recent survey of our postgraduates revealed just 3.9% were seeking employment six months after completing their studies. The Careers Service is well positioned to offer guidance and support to postgraduate researchers.

You are encouraged to use the Careers Service as early as possible. Trained careers advisors are available to discuss ideas and plans; they recognise the different specialised needs of the taught and research postgraduates and can advise you on how to use your knowledge both within and outside of the academic environment. Additionally a number of events, including careers fairs and a programme of employer presentations, are organised so that you can benefit from the opportunity to meet and hear from employers directly.

### **Careers Service -**

▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/sd/careers](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/sd/careers)

Telephone 0116 252 2004

Email [sdzhelpdesk@le.ac.uk](mailto:sdzhelpdesk@le.ac.uk)

## 2.4 Pastoral Support

At the University level, the Graduate School works with the Student Support and Development Service, the Students' Union, and others to provide coordinated practical support and guidance services to postgraduate students:

### *Student Welfare Service*

The Student Welfare Service offers wide-ranging support for students. Officers are on call 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to respond to emergencies. Practical advice and information on a range of issues is also available. Welfare Officers can provide materials on health-related issues including alcohol and drugs, meningitis, pregnancy testing, sexual health, and first aid courses.

The Student Welfare Service coordinates pastoral care for students living in University residences. The Service recruits and trains the Sub-Wardens who provide this support and postgraduate students are invited to apply for positions through the website. The Service also works closely with the local community to intervene in disputes with neighbours and to improve living conditions for those students who choose private rented accommodation. A legal advice clinic is held regularly in conjunction with the School of Law.

#### Student Welfare Service -

▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/welfare](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/welfare)

Telephone 0116 223 1185

Email [welfare@le.ac.uk](mailto:welfare@le.ac.uk)

### *Healthy Living Service*

The Healthy Living Service helps students to enjoy a healthy and balanced life and is able to direct and refer students to appropriate health care services at times of ill health. Working collaboratively both within the University and with organisations outside of the University, the Healthy Living Service ensures that information and healthcare services are easily available to all students.

The service is available to all students at the University of Leicester, including postgraduate researchers, and supports both the physical and psychological aspects of health and wellbeing.

#### Healthy Living Service -

▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/healthy-living-for-students](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/healthy-living-for-students)

Telephone 0116 223 1268

Email [healthyliving@le.ac.uk](mailto:healthyliving@le.ac.uk)

### ***Counselling Service***

The Counselling Service is a free and confidential service, provided by qualified professionals for all University students. Students come to the Counselling Service for a variety of reasons both academic and personal; some just want to come once to talk over something that is troubling them, others may wish to see a counsellor regularly for a period of time or explore issues together with others in a group.

#### **Counselling Service -**

▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/counselling](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/counselling)

Telephone 0116 223 1780

Email [counselling@le.ac.uk](mailto:counselling@le.ac.uk)

### ***Mental Wellbeing Service***

University can be an exciting experience - a time when you leave home, make new friends, and study the subject of your choice in an academic environment. For some however, the reality is different. You may feel homesick, anxious about money and academic pressures, or just that you are not "fitting in". These feelings are common and normal, and most people find that they soon diminish as they settle in. Occasionally, these feelings can become overwhelming and you become depressed, or develop other symptoms of mental ill health. If you feel like this, it is sensible to be proactive and seek help as soon as possible. This specialist service is here to help you manage your difficulties and coordinate the range of support available, to lessen the impact these might have on your studies.

#### **Mental Wellbeing Service -**

▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/student-support-mental-wellbeing](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/student-support-mental-wellbeing)

Telephone 0116 252 2283/0116 229 7751

Email [mentalwellbeing@le.ac.uk](mailto:mentalwellbeing@le.ac.uk)

### ***Chaplaincy***

The University Chaplaincy is part of the Student Support and Development Service and is an information resource for world faiths. Our chaplaincy team is based in The Gatehouse opposite the main campus. Students can drop by to meet new friends, talk to a chaplain, and pray and explore their faith.

#### **Chaplaincy -**

▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/chaplaincy](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/chaplaincy)

Telephone 0116 285 6493

Email [chaplaincy@le.ac.uk](mailto:chaplaincy@le.ac.uk)

### ***University of Leicester Students' Union***

The University of Leicester Students' Union organises social events throughout the year and also operates its own bars and entertainments. There are nearly 200 student groups covering a range of activities and interests, including SPELL the group for postgraduates and mature students. The Student's Union has its own Education Unit which provides free and impartial advice regarding any academic issues to all University students - undergraduate and postgraduate. Postgraduate researchers are welcome to contact the Education Unit at any time during the course of their degree.

University of Leicester Students' Union -  
▶ <http://leicesterunion.com/>

Telephone 0116 223 1148

### **2.5 Support for Students with a Disability or Long-Term Medical Condition**

The AccessAbility Centre offers a range of services to all University of Leicester students who have a specific learning difficulty - such as dyslexia - disability, or other long-term condition. Staff offer one-to-one support, assessment of dyslexia, the coordination of alternative examination arrangements, etc. The Centre acts as a resource base for students and staff and is a relaxed place for students to work. Its computers are equipped with specialised software for speech output (essay planning software and basic speech output software are on the University network). Low-level photocopying, printing, and scanning facilities are also available. The Centre welcomes self-referrals as well as referrals from academic staff.

AccessAbility Centre -  
▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/accessability](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/accessability)

Telephone 0116 252 5002  
Email [accessable@le.ac.uk](mailto:accessable@le.ac.uk)



## 2.6 Support for International Students

The University of Leicester is one of a handful of British universities to feature in the world's top 200 institutions as ranked by both Times Higher Education and Shanghai Jiao Tong University - so it is no surprise that many students from outside the United Kingdom choose to study here. We welcome students from more than seventy countries and have significant numbers of students from China, India, Canada, Nigeria, Malaysia, Pakistan, Taiwan, the USA, Hong Kong, and Saudi Arabia.

The University extends a warm welcome to all international students and has a range of offices and services available to provide help and assistance.

### *International Student Support*

The International Student Support team is part of the University's Student Welfare Service. They coordinate the University's Welcome Programme for new international students, providing an introduction to Leicester and to studying in the United Kingdom. They also run regular social and other events for international students and can provide advice on issues such as immigration, visas, finance, and cultural adjustment.

### *English Language Teaching Unit*

The English Language Teaching Unit offers a wide range of free English language and study skills courses to current students. These courses focus on the language and study skills which you will need to be successful in your programme and English Language Teaching Unit staff work closely with academic departments throughout the University to develop courses that meet the needs of all international students.

#### International Student Support -

▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/welfare/information/international-student-support](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/welfare/information/international-student-support)

Telephone 0116 223 1185  
Email [welfare@le.ac.uk](mailto:welfare@le.ac.uk)

#### English Language Teaching Unit -

▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/offices/eltu](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/eltu)

Telephone 0116 229 7857  
Email [language.services@le.ac.uk](mailto:language.services@le.ac.uk)

## Part Three - Researcher Development Training

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Undertaking a research degree is clearly about producing an excellent piece of research - but it is also about acquiring new skills, becoming a more independent learner, and gaining experience in self-motivation and project management.

The aim of Researcher Development Training is to give you skills you need to become an effective researcher and successfully complete your degree together with transferable skills that will be of use both during your time at the University and in your career beyond. In recognition of the diverse nature of its postgraduate researcher population, the University has developed a "needs-based" approach which provides flexibility in the training that students undertake.

### In this section ►

- 3.1 Purpose and Scope of Researcher Development Training
- 3.2 Organisation of Researcher Development Training
- 3.3 Teaching and Demonstrating
- 3.4 Personal Development Planning (PDP)
- 3.5 Research Student Progress File

### 3.1 Purpose and Scope of Researcher Development Training

Researcher Development Training covers two main skills groups - discipline specific skills and generic skills:

Discipline Specific Skills	Generic Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discipline specific skills/ techniques</li><li>• Understanding your research environment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Research management and related skills</li><li>• Transferable skills</li><li>• Career management skills</li></ul>

Discipline specific skills are those that you will need to complete your research, deliver a doctoral thesis of a suitable standard, and place your work in the context of your research area. Generic skills are those that that you will need both during your time at the University and in your career beyond - such as team working, communication skills, etc.

Both of these skills groups are described in more detail below.

### ***Discipline Specific Skills***

Training in discipline specific research skills and techniques is the key element in your Researcher Development Training. No matter how well developed your ideas for your thesis are when you arrive, your supervisor and thesis committee will help you gain the key skills you will need to deliver your thesis and place it in the context of your discipline. Your training here will help you develop skills including:

- ▶ an understanding of relevant research methodologies and techniques and their appropriate application
- ▶ original, independent, and critical thinking and the ability to develop theoretical concepts
- ▶ an ability to justify the principles and experimental techniques used in your research
- ▶ an ability to summarise, document, report, and reflect on your progress
- ▶ a broad understanding of the context, at a national and international level, in which your research takes place
- ▶ an understanding of the process of academic or commercial exploitation of research results

This part of your Researcher Development Training is likely to be most intense at the start of your degree, but it will continue throughout your time here.

### ***Generic Skills***

To complement your discipline specific skills training, the University provides a range of opportunities to help you develop generic skills - i.e., those skills needed by all researchers regardless of discipline. These are of two main types - research methods skills and researcher development skills. Research methods skills are those that you will need to carry out your research but which are not specific to your discipline - for example, training in qualitative and quantitative methods. Researcher development skills are those which you will need for your broader personal and professional development; they complement your discipline specific and research methods skills, but are transferable outside of your research career - for example, communication and networking skills.

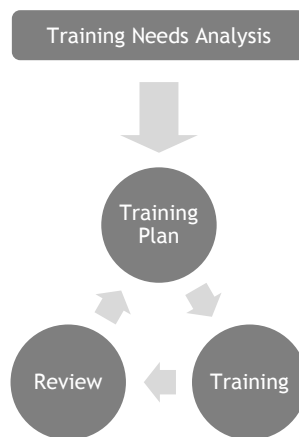
Again, this part of your Researcher Development Training will continue throughout your time here, but obviously some aspects are likely to become more important as you approach the end of your degree and start to think about your career beyond.

### 3.2 Organisation of Researcher Development Training

The University's structured approach to Researcher Development Training will help you make the most of the opportunities available and you will be supported in managing your own development. To help you do this, your Researcher Development Training will follow a four stage model:

- ▶ thinking about your training needs
- ▶ developing a training plan
- ▶ undertaking relevant training
- ▶ reviewing your progress and updating your training plan as needed

This is illustrated in the following diagram and each stage is described in more detail below:



#### ***Thinking About Your Training Needs - Training Needs Analysis***

Undertaking a Training Needs Analysis is an important first step in your Researcher Development Training. It involves thinking about what skills you need in order to complete a specific task - in this case, to successfully complete your research degree. You should start thinking about undertaking a Training Needs Analysis as soon as you start your research degree. Spend some thinking about your various training needs. Ask yourself whether you need to address any gaps in your subject knowledge, learn or refresh an discipline specific skills, get to grips with any IT packages, or learn a new language in order to complete your degree. You should not neglect the generic skills that you will also need in order to complete your research degree such as time management, project management, networking skills, writing skills, and working with others.

Once you have identified the skills that you want to develop, arrange a meeting with your supervisor to discuss your training needs. Ask your supervisor to provide details of skills that they think are important for you to complete your research degree. You can then go on to develop a Training Plan.

## ***Developing Your Training Plan***

Once you have identified your training needs you can start thinking about the development opportunities that are available and begin matching the two up in a Training Plan. The best place to start is the *Guide to Researcher Development Training* which gives an overview of all the training opportunities offered by the University. It is important though that you consider all the available training providers when you are putting together your Training Plan - as well as formal courses/resources available through the University, there will be opportunities to learn new skills informally on your own or in your research group as well as the training available through external providers such as Vitae.

When producing your Training Plan it may be useful to ask yourself the following questions:

- ▶ By when do I need to have received this training?
- ▶ When is this training available?
- ▶ How much time do I want to allocate each week/month to training?
- ▶ How can I fit my Training Plan around my research/employment/social life?

### Training Plan template -

A template that you can use in producing your Training Plan is available from the Graduate School website:

- ▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/development/training/research/progress-file](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/development/training/research/progress-file)

## ***Undertaking Relevant Training***

As a guide, the UK Research Councils suggest that you should spend about one day each month on training. However, you may find that at the start of your research degree you need to spend more time on training than you will towards the end. An important thing to remember is that you may not be able to do all of the training that you want in a single term or year. You should think about how you will complete your Training Plan over the full length of your degree.

Your discipline specific and generic skills training are both rooted in your College, but it is important not to be limited to what is on offer there. Familiarise yourself with what other Colleges offer and contact them if you want to access anything offered by another College. You would normally be expected to attend your College training programme in its entirety - although you might be exempted from specific sessions, with the agreement of your thesis committee, if they are not appropriate.

The training that you receive in your College is just a starting point though - there are many other training opportunities available provided centrally through Student Development, Career Development, the Library, the English Language Teaching Unit, the Languages @ Leicester programme, and others. The *Guide to Researcher Development Training* has information on both College and central training provision and advice on how to access these.

#### Guide to Researcher Development Training -

You can find the Guide to Researcher Development Training online at:

▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/current/rdt-guide](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/current/rdt-guide)

### ***Reviewing Your Progress***

You should see your Training Plan as a dynamic document to which you continue to return and which you develop throughout your degree as part of your continuing personal and professional development. When you undertake training it may reveal strengths or weaknesses that you want to pursue through further training. As you undertake your research you may also identify further training needs that need to be added to your Training Plan. Talk these issues over with your supervisor or book a research skills consultation with Student Development for advice on what training and support will help you to respond to the various challenges presented by your research.

You should re-visit your Training Plan in a formal way at the start of each year of your degree. Put aside some time to review your Training Plan and then meet with your supervisor to discuss how effective your training has been and to think about how you would like to review and develop your plan for the next year.

### **3.3 Teaching and Demonstrating**

There may be opportunities for you to undertake teaching or demonstrating work depending on your discipline. Students usually find this a valuable experience - although it is important to ensure that this, like any other work you undertake, does not interfere with your studies. Duties associated with teaching or demonstrating should take up no more than six hours a week. If you wish to undertake any other paid work, you should speak with your supervisor and Head of School/Department.

Before you start teaching or demonstrating, you should sign up for one of the University's training courses. Student Development can advise you what courses are currently being presented as well as what support is available to help you develop your new skills further.

### 3.4 Personal Development Planning (PDP)

The Researcher Development Training described above focuses on skills required to complete your thesis as well as other wider employment-related skills. It forms a formal part of your research degree and must be completed to the satisfaction of your thesis committee. In addition to this formal requirement, and in order to ensure that you enjoy the richest possible educational and personal experience, the University encourages you to participate in Personal Development Planning (PDP). The University of Leicester's PDP scheme offers you a structured and supported process designed to help you reflect on the progress you are making, and to plan for your personal and longer-term career development.

The potential benefits to postgraduate researchers of undertaking PDP - in terms of academic progress, personal growth, and future employability - are many and varied. Taking time to reflect on the progress of your research and to plan practically for how you might improve and develop your skills will help you to become a more independent and autonomous learner - essential attributes for the successful postgraduate. Thinking about your academic progress in this structured and analytical way, should also make you much more aware of the variety of support services and resources the University offers. This process should better equip you to identify potential difficulties or obstacles much earlier. In doing so PDP ought to assist you in formulating strategies for preventing or overcoming these issues, and therefore contribute to the successful completion of your research. In addition, and no less importantly, PDP provides you with the opportunity to look beyond your research and to think about your employability and future career aspirations. The modern graduate employer is looking for employees who can clearly demonstrate and provide evidence for their ability to manage and practically plan for their own personal and professional progress, and to identify for themselves the available opportunities for career development.

#### Personal Development Planning -

To find out more about PDP and to see the supporting documentation, please visit:

▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/sd/pdp](http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/sd/pdp)

Crucially, Personal Development Planning is a process which you are responsible for managing, maintaining, and developing. You are welcome to commence PDP at any time during your studies. However, we strongly recommend that you do so approximately six months into your research. In this way you will have given yourself adequate opportunity to adjust to the demands of research level study, and you will also have acquired a sufficient body of experience on which to critically reflect. Once you have had the chance to reflect and plan, we suggest that you organise a meeting with your supervisor to discuss the issues and objectives you have identified.

### 3.5 Research Student Progress File

At the start of your degree you will be provided with a *Research Student Progress File*. You can use this to record your progress and plan your personal development as well as ensure that your thesis committee is kept fully informed of the training that you have undertaken. Your supervisor and thesis committee will want to know that you have begun to develop relevant research skills, so it is important that you keep a Training Record of your attendance at training courses. For some College training programmes this record is kept through a Training Passport. Whether a Passport system operates or not though, details of all your training activity should be noted and recorded in your *Research Student Progress File*. This record will be important in your annual review and, especially, in the review that takes place to decide whether you transfer from Advanced Postgraduate (APG) status to full registration on a specific research degree.

Your *Research Student Progress File* will also be useful as you start to think about your continuing personal and professional development. While PDP is not a formal expectation of your research degree, you should arrange to meet with your supervisor to discuss it at least once a year. To prepare for this meeting, complete the Self-Development Plan section of your *Research Student Progress File*. This should then form the basis of your discussion with your supervisor



## Part Four - Administrative Matters

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This section of the Handbook contains important administrative advice regarding your registration and related matters. The University's rules on these are set out in full in the *Regulations for Research Students*.

For further advice you can contact the Graduate Office. The Graduate Office deals with all administrative matters relating to registered postgraduate researchers and is located on the ground floor of the Fielding Johnson Building. It is open to visitors Mondays to Fridays from 9.30 am to 4.00 pm so you can call in if you require advice or information during the course of your studies.

You can also contact the Graduate Office by email or phone:

- ▶ [pgresearch@le.ac.uk](mailto:pgresearch@le.ac.uk)
- ▶ 0116 252 2299 / 0116 252 2293

Please make sure to include your student identification number/have this to hand whenever you contact the Graduate Office.

Key staff you may find helpful to contact are:

Name	Role
Ms. Jackie Lowe	Research Student Support Officer - <i>Overall management of processes relating to registration, examination, and graduation of research students</i>
Mr Brett Dodgson	Graduate School Support Officer - <i>Graduate School induction arrangements and materials, postgraduate experience surveys, enquiries relating to extensions of registration</i>
Miss Elizabeth Kramer	Principal Clerk - <i>For enquiries relating to registration status, including transfer to writing-up status, suspension of registration, and withdrawals</i>

### In this section ▶

- 4.1 Registration
- 4.2 Fees
- 4.3 Personal Details
- 4.4 Renewing Your Student Visa
- 4.5 Council Tax Exemptions/Adjustments
- 4.6 Advanced Postgraduate (APG) Status
- 4.7 Monitoring Your Progress
- 4.8 Holidays and Illnesses
- 4.9 Changes to Your Registration

## **4.1 Registration**

All students are required to register in accordance with the instructions issued to them by the Admissions Office. Having registered at the start of their programme, all students are then required to re-register each year on the anniversary of their initial registration. Instructions for doing this will be sent at the time to your University email account. Please ensure that you follow these instructions carefully as re-registration is a requirement of your student status and must be completed for each year of your degree. Failure to re-register by the stated deadline will result in you having to pay an additional late registration fee.

Please note that you will not be able to re-register if you have any outstanding fees so you must ensure that your tuition and other fees (accommodation charges, bench fees, etc.) are paid by the deadlines given.

Once you have registered for your first year, you will receive a copy of this Handbook and the *Regulations for Research Students*. You will also receive:

### ***Student Identification Card***

Your student identification card lasts for the duration of your studies. You should keep your card safe - it gives you access to the University Library and you may need it to access University buildings or to prove your identity while on campus. There is a fee payable for replacement cards. Your student card also shows your nine-digit student identification number. This is your unique personal identification number and must be quoted in all correspondence with the University.

### ***University Computer Network and Email Account***

When you have completed registration you will be asked to create a University computer network and email account (sometimes known as your CFS account). It is important that you do this. Your University email address is our primary means of contacting you and you must check it regularly as many important administrative messages are sent only to that address. If you are having problems setting up or using your University computer network and email account or if you lose your password, please contact IT Services - email [ithelp@le.ac.uk](mailto:ithelp@le.ac.uk) or call 0116 252 2253.

### ***Certificate of Registration***

This is only issued to full-time students and confirms your registration as a full-time student of the University. You may need to show this to your sponsor if you have one or if you wish to apply for an exemption/adjustment on your council tax bill. This is an important document which you should keep safe - there is a fee payable for all replacement copies.

Please note that part-time and distance learning students do not receive a Certificate of Registration. If you are a part-time or distance learning student and need proof of your registration to show to a sponsor, etc. please let us know by email to [pgresearch@le.ac.uk](mailto:pgresearch@le.ac.uk)

## **4.2 Fees**

Details of the sessional fees for the current academic year are included in the *Regulations for Research Students*.

If you are responsible for paying your tuition fees you can either pay them in full prior to the start of your academic year or in two instalments with the first instalment payable prior to the start of your academic year and the second instalment due towards the beginning of the next term. Exact dates will be confirmed in your fee statement which will be emailed to your University email account during your first term.

In order to register it is a requirement that at least the first instalment has been paid. If you choose to pay in two instalments and the second instalment is not paid by the due date, this could lead to your registration being cancelled.

Students may be required to pay for certain services or facilities (including photocopying and printing from computers in the open-access computer laboratories). Details are provided at the point of service or in departmental literature as appropriate.

## **4.3 Personal Details**

It is important that you let the Graduate Office know immediately if any of your personal details, such as your name or address/contact information, should change. If any of your personal details change, please let us know by email to [pgresearch@le.ac.uk](mailto:pgresearch@le.ac.uk) making sure to include your full name and student identification number. You can also use the change of address form available at the University main reception in the Fielding Johnson building.

If you want to let us know that your name has changed - for example, if you get married or divorced - you will need to let us know in writing and provide a copy of your marriage certificate/decreed absolute. Please do not send original documents.

Likewise, you will need to let us know in writing if you notice that the name we hold for you is incorrect. If this is the case, you should provide a copy of your passport. Again, please do not send original documents. The name we hold for you will appear on your degree certificate, so you should let us know immediately if it is incorrect in any way.

## **4.4 Renewing Your Student Visa**

International students whose visa will expire before the completion of their studies should contact the University's Student Welfare Service for advice - email [welfare@le.ac.uk](mailto:welfare@le.ac.uk) or call 0116 223 1185.

Please note that owing to the volume of visa renewal requests, delays can occur at certain times of the year. If you need to renew your visa, you should allow plenty of time for this and contact the Student Welfare Service as early as possible.

#### 4.5 Council Tax Exemptions/Adjustments

You may be entitled to an exemption from/adjustment to your council tax assessment if you are registered as a full-time student. However, the exact rules do vary between local authorities and you should contact your local authority directly for advice on their eligibility criteria.

Those registered as a part-time or distance learning student are not entitled to an exemption from/adjustment to their council tax assessment.

Local authorities will require proof that you are registered as a full-time student before applying any exemption/adjustment. This will be provided automatically by the Graduate Office if you live within Leicestershire or Lincolnshire - i.e., in one of the following local authority areas:

- ▶ Leicester City Council
- ▶ Blaby District Council
- ▶ Charnwood Borough Council
- ▶ Harborough District Council
- ▶ Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
- ▶ Melton Borough Council
- ▶ North West Leicestershire District Council
- ▶ Oadby and Wigston Borough Council
- ▶ City of Lincoln Council
- ▶ Boston Borough Council
- ▶ East Lindsey District Council
- ▶ North Kesteven District Council
- ▶ South Holland District Council
- ▶ South Kesteven District Council
- ▶ West Lindsey District Council

The Graduate Office will also automatically provide this for students living in the following local authority areas:

- ▶ Nottingham City Council
- ▶ Nuneaton Borough Council
- ▶ Peterborough City Council
- ▶ Rutland County Council

If you live outside of these areas, you should use a photocopy of your Certificate of Registration as proof that you are registered as a full-time student.

Please note that full-time students will normally lose their entitlement to an exemption from/adjustment to their council tax assessment at the point that they transfer to writing-up status. However, again the exact rules do vary between local authorities and you should contact your local authority directly for advice on their eligibility criteria.

#### 4.6 Advanced Postgraduate (APG) Status

At the start of your degree, you will normally be registered as an Advanced Postgraduate (APG) for your first year if you are a full-time student or for your first two years if you are a part-time or distance learning student. During this period your School/Department will assess your overall suitability as a research student and, at the end of it, will make a recommendation on the degree for which you should register. In most cases it is likely that this will be a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD). You will also undertake the majority of your Researcher Development Training during this period.

#### 4.7 Monitoring Your Progress

Each School/Department has its own procedures to monitor your progress which meet the requirements of the Code of Practice for Research Degrees. Your supervisor or thesis committee should explain these to you when you start your studies.

Your main supervisor has responsibility for monitoring through consultations the progress of your research. Expectations on the regularity of consultations and the nature of the feedback provided differ between disciplines and this should also be discussed with your supervisor or thesis committee when you start your studies. A useful routine adopted by some students and their supervisors is for the student to produce a very brief (100-word say) synopsis of each supervisory session which they forward to their supervisor afterwards. At the least, this provides a (relatively minimal) record of progress through the supervisions which you can collate in your *Research Student Progress File*. In addition to these regular supervision sessions, it is likely that you will have a thesis committee with which you will meet formally twice a year to discuss your progress and set targets. You should receive a report following each meeting.

Towards the end of your period of registration as an Advanced Postgraduate, you will be required to produce a written report that is considered by two members of the academic staff including your supervisor. You will also attend an oral examination or present a departmental seminar on your research. Taken with the record of progress on developing research skills, the assessment of your report forms the basis of a recommendation to the Graduate Dean on your transfer to a named research degree. Further information is given in your *Research Student Progress File*.

In addition, you will be asked to complete an annual report form at the time you re-register each year. This form will be sent to you by the Graduate Office with your re-registration pack and is a report from you to the Graduate Dean. A copy is provided in your *Research Student Progress File* for information. This annual report enables the Graduate Dean to ensure that Schools/Departments are following the Code of Practice for Research Degrees and gives you the opportunity to raise any matters of concern or to pass comment on your experiences as a research student. We have found that it is best if the report is shared with the members of your thesis committee before it is submitted to the Graduate Dean. However, it is recognised that you might want to discuss issues outside the thesis committee structure. In these circumstances, there is an open invitation to all research students to meet with the Graduate Dean to discuss these issues on an informal basis if you think that would be helpful. Feel free to email her at [graduatedean@le.ac.uk](mailto:graduatedean@le.ac.uk) to arrange a meeting.

#### **4.8 Holidays and Illness**

As a research student you will be working during vacations as well as term time. You may take holidays, but you should first advise your supervisor of periods when you will be away - particularly if you are a full-time student.

If you are funded by one of the Research Councils, you may take up to eight weeks holiday each year including public holidays but excluding University closed days - the University is normally closed for six days each year in addition to the normal public holidays, usually four days between the Christmas and New Year holidays and two days around the Easter holiday.

It is expected that other students not funded by the Research Councils will take a similar approach with regards to leave.

If you are a full-time student and are absent because you are ill, you should let your supervisor know as soon as possible. If you are absent for more than one week, you should also submit a medical certificate to the Graduate Office. If you are suffering from an illness which you feel is seriously affecting your studies (whether you are studying full-time or part-time), you should discuss this with your supervisor and, if appropriate, speak to the Graduate Office about temporarily suspending your studies.

## 4.9 Changes to Your Registration

Any change to your registration status requires approval from the Graduate Dean. In addition to your transfer from advanced postgraduate status to a named degree, changes to your registration status include transfer to writing-up status, extension of registration, suspension of registration, and withdrawal from studies.

More advice on each of these is included below. If you need any further advice, please contact the Graduate Office.

### *Transfer to writing-up status*

You should aim to complete your active research within three years if you are a full-time student or five years if you are a part-time or distance learning student. You should be able to start writing-up your thesis before the end of this time - however, the University recognises that the production of a thesis may take a number of months. If you need to go into a fourth year - or sixth year if you are a part-time or distance learning student - you may request to register as a writing-up student and pay a reduced fee.

You may register as a writing-up student for period of up to twelve months - by the end of which you must submit your thesis. As a writing-up student you are entitled to appropriate support from your supervisor as well as continued access to your University email and the Library. The fee to register as a writing-up student is £100 which is payable in two instalments - £50 for the first six months and £50 for the remaining six months or any part thereof. You should note that if you were previously registered as a full-time student, at writing-up status most local authorities will no longer consider you eligible for council tax exemptions/adjustments. You are not required to be resident in Leicester while at writing-up status and may well be in employment by this time. However, you must ensure that you comply with any applicable visa requirements. Most sponsors - including the Research Councils - will not pay the writing-up fee for you.

If you want to register as a writing-up student you need to have completed the minimum period of registration for your degree and have finished the active part of your research. You can be registered as a writing-up student for a maximum of twelve months; if you do not submit your thesis by the end of that time, you will need to request an extension to your registration and pay the appropriate fees. Please note that not all research degrees permit a writing-up year and you should contact the Graduate Office for advice if you are unsure.

Form -

Transfers to writing-up status should be requested using the writing-up request form available at:

▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/forms/writingup-request.doc](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/forms/writingup-request.doc)

### ***Extension of registration***

You are expected to submit your thesis within the maximum registration period permitted for your degree - four years for full-time students and six years for part-time students. The University takes submission deadlines very seriously and it is important that you make every effort to ensure that your thesis is submitted on or before the last day of your final year.

You must contact the Graduate Office if you are unsure what your expected submission date is. You will need to organise your work plan so that you will meet this deadline - remembering to leave sufficient time at the end of your final year for proofreading and for your supervisor to read and comment on your thesis and for you to make any changes as needed.

Occasionally though circumstances may change. If you will be unable to complete your thesis by your expected submission date, you will need to request an extension of your registration. If you think that you will need an extension of your registration, we would encourage you to discuss your situation with your supervisor. It is important to note though that any request for an extension must be made at least one month before the end of your current period of registration.

If you need an extension of your registration you must complete a request form and then pass this to your supervisor. Attached to the request form should be a detailed work plan that sets out how you will complete the thesis over the extension period. Your supervisor needs to sign the form to indicate that the request has their support. The form can then be returned to the Graduate Office.

Each request is considered individually and the University tries to respond flexibly and sympathetically. However, students who need to request an extension of their registration should note the following:

- ▶ the extension period must be no longer than six months - requests for an extension of more than six months (or for separate extensions that cumulatively total more than six months) will be approved only in exceptional circumstances
- ▶ tuition fees are payable for all extension periods - in 2010/2011 fees of £433.25 are payable for extensions of three months or less and £866.50 for extensions of three to six months (students registered on the EdD, DSocSci, or any distance learning programme should ask their School/Department for the applicable fees)
- ▶ further restrictions may apply if you are funded by one of the United Kingdom Research Councils

Form -

Extensions should be requested using the extension request form available at:

- ▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/forms/extension-request.doc](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/forms/extension-request.doc)



### ***Suspension of registration***

A suspension is a temporary withdrawal from your studies for a period of between three and twelve months. A suspension may be appropriate if you are ill, need a period of maternity/paternity leave, or have some other serious personal or financial difficulties that are affecting your ability to study.

If you are considering suspending your studies, we would encourage you to seek advice from your supervisor. You may also want to speak with the University's Student Welfare Service or the Students' Union Education Unit. It is important to note though that any request for a suspension must be made at the time it is needed, or in advance if at all possible - retrospective requests will not be considered under any circumstances.

If you need to suspend your studies you must complete a request form and then pass this to the administrator in your School/Department. Your School/Department will initially consider your request and, if it is supported, pass this to the Graduate Office.

Each request is considered individually and the University tries to respond flexibly and sympathetically. However, students who need to request a suspension of their studies should note the following:

- ▶ the suspension period must be at least three months long - requests for suspensions of less than three months will not be considered
- ▶ the suspension period must be no longer than twelve months - requests for a suspension of more than twelve months (or for separate suspensions that would cumulatively total more than twelve months over the course of your studies) will be approved only in exceptional circumstances
- ▶ students may only resume their studies on one of four fixed entry points - 01 October, 01 January, 01 April, or 01 July
- ▶ no tuition fees are payable for an agreed period of suspension - however, for the duration of the suspension of studies students have no access to University facilities such as the Library or their CFS/University email account nor are they entitled to any support from their supervisor or School/Department

Form -

Suspensions should be requested using the suspension request form available at:

- ▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/forms/suspension-request.doc](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/forms/suspension-request.doc)

### ***Withdrawal from studies***

We hope that your time here will be both happy and successful. Occasionally though circumstances may change. If you are considering withdrawing from your studies - i.e., ending your registration - we would encourage you to seek advice from your supervisor. You may also want to speak with the University's Student Welfare Service or the Students' Union Education Unit.

If you decide that you do need to withdraw from your studies, you need to formally notify the Graduate Office. This is important as failure to notify the Graduate Office may mean that you continue to incur fees.

## Part Five - Writing and Submitting Your Doctoral Thesis

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Your thesis is the culmination of your research degree. Here you can find comprehensive advice and guidance to support you through the process of writing and submitting your thesis and taking the viva examination.

### In this section ►

- 5.1 Getting Started
- 5.2 Managing Your Writing and Yourself
- 5.3 Developing Your Writing
- 5.4 Restricting Access to Your Thesis
- 5.5 Notice of Intention to Submit
- 5.6 First Submission of Your Thesis
- 5.7 The Viva Examination
- 5.8 After the Viva Examination
- 5.9 Final Submission of Your Thesis
- 5.10 Graduation and Degree Confirmation

It is important that you make sure that you are fully prepared for the process of writing and submitting your thesis and that you are aware of all applicable University regulations. To help you, the Colleges and Student Development regularly present workshops for final year postgraduate researchers that cover key aspects such as managing your writing and preparing for the viva examination. Additionally, the Graduate School has produced two comprehensive online guides and students are encouraged to consult these early on as part of their overall Training Plan.

### Graduate School Online Guides -

For advice on planning, writing, and submitting your thesis and sitting the viva examination:

- [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis)

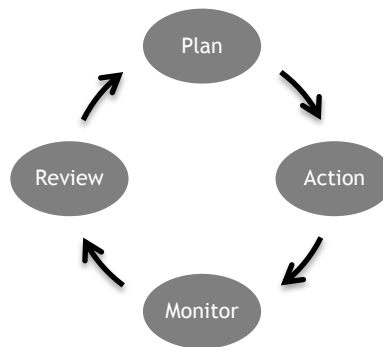
For advice on electronic thesis submission:

- [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/etheses](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/etheses)

### 5.1 Getting Started

Writing your thesis may well be the biggest challenge of your academic career so far. The scale of the task will no doubt seem daunting. However, it is important that you are not intimidated. A project of this scale requires careful management and you will need to actively plan and control its direction to ensure that you deliver a thesis that is of a sufficiently high standard by your expected submission date. We can illustrate how you will manage the process of writing your thesis as a control loop.

The control loop is a simple model that you may have come across before in some form:



- ▶ Plan - Thinking about what you want to do and how you are going to do it
- ▶ Action - Doing the activity you have planned
- ▶ Monitor - Looking back at your progress
- ▶ Review - Comparing your progress against your plan and seeing whether you are on track or need to do anything differently

Applying this model to the process of writing your thesis will give you a mechanism for managing your work - putting you in control and helping you deliver your thesis.

### *Planning Your Final Year*

Planning is not about having lots of lists or timetables. Put simply, planning is thinking about what you want to do and how you are going to do it. In this case, the "what" is your thesis and the "how" is your writing process. You will need to think about both in developing a plan for your final year.

#### Planning Your Final Year -

You can find advice on planning the content and structure of your thesis at:

- ▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/final-year/thesis-plan](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/final-year/thesis-plan)

You can find advice on developing your work plan at:

- ▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/final-year/work-plan](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/final-year/work-plan)

Once you have developed both parts of your plan, you need to discuss it with your supervisor to make sure it is realistic. Once you and your supervisor have agreed a final version of your plan, you are ready to start writing your thesis. This can seem like a massive step, and sometimes the size of the task can make it hard to know where to begin. In fact you can start anywhere - the important thing is that you do start. Remember that your first step is to write a sentence - not the whole thesis.

## 5.2 Managing Your Writing and Yourself

You have your plan and have made a start on your writing. The key now is to keep going, but doing that as effectively as possible will depend on you being able to manage your work - taking active control of your writing, your time, and yourself so that you follow the plan you have developed and agreed.

Spend some time thinking about how you will:

- ▶ manage your writing and your work to make sure you keep to the plan you have developed
- ▶ manage any problems that you experience so that they do not affect your progress
- ▶ manage your motivation so that you maintain focus over your final year
- ▶ manage yourself so that you stay healthy and get the right balance

### Managing Your Writing and Yourself -

More advice on all these things can be found at:

- ▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/managing](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/managing)

Remember that a key part of managing your work is to monitor your progress and review this against the work plan you have developed. This is something that is best done regularly - we would suggest weekly or every other week - as this will allow you to identify and address any problems early on.

## 5.3 Developing Your Writing

As you get further along in your writing, you will start to think about its quality and whether there is anything you can do to improve this. You cannot learn how to be a good writer, but there are techniques that you can follow that will help you develop your writing and ensure that it communicates your ideas effectively. In particular, you will need to think about your readers, signpost your thesis, and draft and re-draft your work.

In addition, you will want to think about other relevant techniques to help you avoid any inadvertent plagiarism and to ensure that you can make the best use of the features in word processing applications such as MS Word to help manage your writing as effectively as possible.

It is also important to get feedback from your supervisor as your writing progresses and this should already be a part of your work plan and your strategy for managing your writing.

### Developing Your Writing -

More advice on all these things can be found at:

▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/developing](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/developing)

Finally, remember that it is natural to be anxious about the quality of your work, but do not let this stop you writing or allow yourself to be caught in the trap of repeatedly revising the same section. Being realistic as to what to expect from your writing will avoid wasting time through worrying rather than getting on with your thesis.

#### 5.4 Restricting Access to Your Thesis

In most cases there is no need to request any form of restriction on access to your thesis.

A restriction on access may be needed though if your thesis contains sensitive material - such as sensitive personal information or information of commercial value. If you are unsure, speak with your supervisor in the first instance. You should also consult any sponsors, etc. involved in your research on whether or not access to your thesis should be restricted.

Where it is necessary to restrict access to a thesis, this can be done by requesting that it be placed under a moratorium. If your thesis needs to be placed under a moratorium, you need to request this when you submit your final bound copies to the Graduate Office. At that point you will need to submit a signed Author Consent Form and in this you should indicate that a moratorium is needed.

#### 5.5 Notice of Intention to Submit

You are required to give the University at least three months' notice before you submit your thesis. This notice period is to allow enough time for examiners to be nominated by your School/Department and considered and approved by the Graduate Dean.

### Notice of Intention to Submit -

More advice and the Notice of Intention to Submit form can be found at:

▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/developing/notice](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/developing/notice)

Once your Notice of Intention to Submit has been received, you will be sent a copy of the Graduate Office's Guidance for Submission and Examination of Your Thesis.

## 5.6 First Submission of Your Thesis

It could be that at the start of your final year you found it hard to get going on your thesis. As your final year draws to a close, you may well face the opposite problem - bringing yourself to let it go.

### *Getting Finished: When is Enough Enough?*

The first thing to remember is that you are working to a deadline - you should be aiming to submit your thesis by the end of your final year. It is important that you keep to this deadline. In your work plan you should have taken your expected submission date into account, allowing some weeks before this date to give your supervisor a chance to read and comment on your thesis and for you to make any changes as needed.

Ensuring that you keep to this deadline should be a key part in your process of deciding when to submit your thesis.

Ultimately, you are responsible for deciding whether your thesis is ready for submission. As you approach your expected submission date, you need to make up your own mind as to whether your thesis is ready. Many students are reluctant to submit their thesis thinking that it requires further work. The first thing you need to do is go back to your thesis plan:

- ▶ have you covered everything you wanted to cover?
- ▶ does your thesis clearly set out what your original contribution to knowledge in your discipline is and what implications stem from that?
- ▶ have you followed the advice for developing your writing?
- ▶ have you completed a process of successive re-drafts?

If you have taken a structured approach to writing your thesis and can answer "yes" to all of these questions, then it is likely that your thesis is ready - even if you think it can be improved, the odds are that the work you have done is sufficient for your first submission.

Even if you are not entirely happy with your thesis, your supervisor is there to act as a safety check. Make sure your supervisor has several weeks in which to read and comment on your thesis before the final submission deadline. Ask your supervisor for their view on whether it is ready for submission and, if not, exactly what work still needs to be done.

Remember though that the decision to submit your thesis rests with you - you should take account of your supervisor's opinion, but it is advisory only. If your supervisor is of the opinion that your thesis is ready for submission, this should not be taken as an assurance that the degree sought will be awarded - that decision rests wholly with your examiners.

If you and your supervisor are both happy that your thesis is ready for submission, you next need to start making your final checks before you have the thesis bound. In particular, you need to ensure that you have followed the University's rules on formatting your thesis.

## ***Formatting and Binding Your Thesis***

Having put so much effort into writing your thesis, you will want to make sure that it is well presented. The University has specific requirements that you must follow in formatting your thesis - if not, your thesis may be returned to you for correction.

### Formatting and Binding Your Thesis -

You can find advice on formatting your thesis at:

- ▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/year-end/formatting](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/year-end/formatting)

You can find advice on binding your thesis at:

- ▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/year-end/binding](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/year-end/binding)

In particular, you should note that there are maximum word limits for doctoral theses, and these differ depending on your College and the type of degree you are registered for.

It is very important that your thesis does not exceed the maximum word limit appropriate to your College and degree type. Your thesis may not be sent for examination if it is longer than the prescribed limits.

### Thesis Word Limits -

You can find advice on the maximum word limits for doctoral theses at:

- ▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/year-end/formatting/word-limits](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/year-end/formatting/word-limits)

## ***Submitting Your Thesis***

You must submit two soft-bound copies of your thesis to the Graduate Office. You can find the Graduate Office on the ground floor of the Fielding Johnson Building.

Theses do not need to be submitted in person, but if you are sending them by post you should consider using a secure means such as recorded delivery.

You must ensure that all fees due to the University (tuition fees, bench fees, accommodation fees, etc.) have been paid in full before you submit your thesis - it will not be sent for examination if you have any outstanding debts.



## 5.7 The Viva Examination<sup>1</sup>

Literally, "viva voce" means by or with the living voice - i.e., by word of mouth as opposed to writing. The viva examination is where you will give a verbal defence of your thesis; its purpose is to:

- ▶ demonstrate that the thesis is your own work
- ▶ confirm that you understand what you have written
- ▶ investigate your awareness of where your original work sits in relation to the wider research field
- ▶ establish whether the thesis is of sufficiently high standard to merit the award of the degree for which it is submitted

It is important to remember that while the viva might feel like a wholly new challenge, in fact you will probably have done more preparation than you might think - for example presenting work at a conference, speaking at a seminar in your School/Department, or simply explaining your research to a friend or your family.

All viva examinations are different, so it is not possible to describe exactly what will happen - but the advice below should give you a clearer idea of what to expect.

### ***Who will my examiners be?***

Your Head of School/Department will have nominated your examiners in consultation with your supervisor; these nominations are then approved by the Graduate Dean. You will normally have two examiners:

- ▶ an internal examiner who will be a member of academic staff of the University, usually from your School/Department but not one of your supervisors
- ▶ an external examiner who will normally be a member of academic staff of another institution or occasionally a professional in another field with expertise in your area of research

In some cases there may also be a Chair person for the examination. The Chair is there to ensure the examination is conducted in line with University regulations and is not there to examine your thesis. If there is a Chair person, it will usually be a senior member of the academic staff of your School/Department.

Your supervisor should let you know who your examiners will be as it is important that you ensure you are familiar with their work and any particular approach that they may take when examining your thesis.

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<sup>1</sup> Much of the content of this section was taken from Student Development's "Preparing for Your Viva" which is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Non-Commercial 2.0 UK: England and Wales License. You can read the full text at <http://www2.le.ac.uk/offices/ssds/sd/pgr/resources/viva>

### ***What will my examiners look for?***

The purpose of the viva is to establish that your work is of a sufficiently high standard to merit the award of the degree for which it is submitted. In order to be awarded a doctoral degree, the thesis should demonstrate an original contribution to knowledge and contain work which is deemed worthy of publication - though not necessarily in the form presented.

It is expected that the thesis will be clearly and concisely written, well argued, and show a satisfactory knowledge of primary and secondary sources. There should be a full bibliography/references and, where appropriate, a description of the methodology employed. Examiners will also assess whether the thesis complies with the University's guidelines regarding length, presentation, relevance, and style.

In order to do this, examiners may:

- ▶ ask you to justify your arguments
- ▶ ask you to justify not only things which you have included in your thesis but also things which you may have left out
- ▶ argue certain points with you
- ▶ expect you to discuss any developments which may flow from your work in the future

### ***How will my examiners behave?***

Your thesis will have strengths and weaknesses and the examiners will want to discuss these. It is considered a positive thing, indeed an essential thing, that you can discuss both the strengths and the weaknesses. You can think of the weaknesses as an opportunity to demonstrate your skill at critical appraisal.

Remember that examiners seek to find and discuss weaknesses in all theses - you should not interpret criticism as an indication that the examination will not end successfully.

### ***How can I prepare for the viva examination?***

Preparing for your viva examination is an active process - it is something you have to plan, manage, and review. In particular, some form of practice viva examination should be an essential part of your preparations. It is also important to make sure that you think positively. Positive thinking will help you feel in control of the situation which will increase your confidence.

#### **Preparing for the Viva Examination -**

Detailed advice on how to prepare for your viva examination, including common questions that you can use in a practice viva examination, can be found at:

- ▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/viva/self-help](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/viva/self-help)

Once you have read through this advice, think about putting together a plan for your preparations. As with the plan you developed for writing your thesis, think about how much time you have available, what your objectives are, when these need to be achieved, and whether there are any other commitments on your time that you need to take account of.

Student Development also run a workshop for doctoral students preparing for their viva examination and students are encouraged to attend this as part of their plan. It is recommended that students should have already made their first thesis submission before attending the workshop or be planning to submit in the next six months.

## 5.8 After the Viva Examination

At the end of your viva examination, your examiners may ask you to leave the room so that they can discuss what recommendation to make. Do not worry if it is some time before you are asked to come back in - your examiners will have a lot to discuss, so it is not a sign that you have done badly if this does take some time. Most students who get to this stage are successful and are awarded their degree - try to relax and to stay positive while you wait.

When you are asked to come back in, your examiners will normally be able to tell you immediately what recommendation they intend to make. In some cases though they may need more time to discuss this. If that is the case, they will tell you when and how they expect to inform you.

### *What recommendations can the examiners make?*

The University's regulations set out what recommendations examiners may make following a viva examination. Your examiners will make one of the following recommendations:

- ▶ Award of the Degree
- ▶ Award of the Degree Subject to Amendments
- ▶ Referral for Re-Submission for the Same Degree
- ▶ Award of a Lower Degree
- ▶ Referral for Re-Submission for a Lower Degree
- ▶ Fail

#### Receiving the Examiners' Recommendations -

You can find more information on what recommendations your examiners may make and what each one means at:

- ▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/what-next/receiving](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/what-next/receiving)

It is only very rarely that examiners recommend the award of the degree without requiring some changing changes to the thesis - in the majority of cases, examiners will recommend the award of the degree subject to amendments or, in a smaller number of cases, will recommend a referral for re-submission.

#### *Award of the Degree Subject to Amendments*

This recommendation is made when the student has successfully completed the viva examination and the degree for which they are registered can be awarded subject to them satisfactorily making the changes to the thesis recommended by the examiners. The student may be required to make minor or major amendments as directed and the examiners will provide details as to what changes need to be made.

Making minor amendments usually involves correcting typographical or grammatical errors and may include corrections to references and diagrams. It may also involve the re-writing of small sections of the thesis. Where a recommendation is made of award subject to minor amendments, it is expected that the student will complete and submit these to the internal examiner within one month.

Making major amendments usually involves corrections as above but will probably also involve the re-writing of more extensive sections of the thesis. Where a recommendation is made of award subject to major amendments, it is expected that the student will complete and submit these to the internal examiner within six months.

#### *Referral for Re-Submission*

In a small number of cases examiners may decide that more substantial additional work is needed, involving either further active research or extensive re-writing of the thesis. A further viva examination may also be needed. In these cases, a recommendation of referral for re-submission will be made.

Where a recommendation of referral for re-submission is made, the Graduate Office will provide the student with a written report from the examiners that clearly sets out the shortcomings of the thesis and the actions needed to address these. They will also confirm the expected re-submission date; the student will be given a minimum of six months and a maximum of twelve months in which to submit two revised soft-bound copies of the thesis to the Graduate Office. Extensions to the expected re-submission date are not permitted.

Students required to re-submit their thesis are charged a re-examination fee of £175.00 (PhD programmes) or £120.00 (other programmes).

A separate fee is payable by students who have been asked to undertake major amendments or who have been referred for re-submission and who want to retain access to the University Library and online services such as University email.

## 5.9 Final Submission of Your Thesis

If you have been awarded your degree without amendments being needed, or you have made any amendments needed and your internal examiner has confirmed these have been done satisfactorily, you need to prepare and submit the final version of your thesis. This should be done promptly - the conferral of your degree may be delayed until the final copies of your thesis have been received.

For your final submission, you are required to submit two copies of your thesis to the Graduate Office - one soft bound copy and one hard bound copy. Additionally, you are required to submit an electronic copy of your thesis to the Leicester Research Archive.

### *How should I format my thesis?*

The formatting requirements for the final submission of your thesis are the same as for your first submission.

#### Formatting Your Thesis -

Advice on formatting your thesis - including the University's maximum word limits for doctoral theses - can be found at:

▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/year-end/formatting](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/year-end/formatting)

### *How should I bind my thesis?*

The regulations on thesis binding are different between the first and final submissions. You are required to present two bound copies of your thesis for your final submission - one soft bound copy and one hard bound copy.

#### *Soft Bound Copy*

Your soft bound copy should follow the same binding requirements as for your first submission - the thesis must be "perfect bound" (also known as thermal or hot glue binding). Comb or spiral binding is not acceptable, nor is insertion into a ring binder or slide binder. The cover should be green and it is useful to re-print the title page on the cover. The spine of the thesis can be left blank.

#### *Hard Bound Copy*

The cover should be Standard Green - Arbelave Library Buckram No. 563. The front and back covers should be blank while the spine should have your name, thesis title (abbreviated to fit if necessary), degree, and year of first submission in gold lettering. An illustration of how this should look is available at:

▶ [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/what-next/final-submission/spine.pdf](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/thesis/what-next/final-submission/spine.pdf)

Please contact the Graduate Office if you are unsure of any format/binding requirements for your hard bound thesis - these are prescribed in the University regulations and your thesis may be returned for correction should you not follow them.

### *How do I submit the electronic copy of my thesis?*

Since 2008 all University of Leicester doctoral students have been required to submit an electronic copy of their thesis in addition to two bound printed copies. The electronic copy of the thesis is often referred to as an ethesis.

Instructions for submitting the electronic copy of your thesis can be found at:

► [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/etheses/submission](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/etheses/submission)

#### *Benefits of Electronic Thesis Submission*

Your ethesis is added to two digital research archives - the University's own Leicester Research Archive and the national Electronic Theses Online Service (EThOS). The requirement to submit theses to the Leicester Research Archive is part of a wider movement towards open access to research outputs. However, it is one that brings a number of benefits to doctoral students. Etheses are much more accessible than printed theses - adding your thesis to the Leicester Research Archive means that it will be accessible to the worldwide research community, significantly improving the chances that your work will be viewed, consulted, and cited. So having your thesis available electronically massively increases its visibility and increasing the visibility of your work also increases your visibility as a researcher - something that is particularly important as you look to take your first steps into your career beyond your degree.

You can find more information about electronic submission and the benefits of making your thesis available through the Leicester Research Archive at:

► [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/etheses](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/etheses)

#### *Pre-Publication Concerns*

Making your thesis available electronically through the Leicester Research Archive constitutes a form of publication. As such it can be a cause for concern for those students who are considering how to publish their work elsewhere - either as a book or journal article(s) - as editors/publishers will not usually accept work that has already been published.

The University is aware that for this reason, some students will have concerns about submitting their thesis to the Leicester Research Archive.

First of all it needs to be remembered that electronic submission is a requirement of all doctoral students - there are no exceptions from that requirement. Moreover, it is by no means certain that adding your thesis to the Leicester Research Archive will harm your chances of publishing the work by another route. Indeed, research has found that submitting a thesis to an online repository such as the Leicester Research Archive rarely precludes subsequent use of the material in another form.

If you have pre-publication concerns regarding submitting your thesis to the Leicester Research Archive, more advice is available at:

► [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/etheses/concerns](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool/resources/etheses/concerns)

## **5.10 Graduation and Degree Confirmation**

After the award of your degree has been officially confirmed by the University, the Graduate Office will send you written confirmation of this and, in due course, advice on attending the next degree congregation ceremony.

### ***When will I graduate?***

Students will be invited to attend the next available ceremony after the award of their degree. There are ceremonies in the Winter (normally January) and in the Summer (normally July).

Those students who are likely to graduate in January will be contacted in late November with details of the ceremony, and those students who are likely to graduate in July will be contacted in April. Details are sent to all potential graduands and you should reply even if your award has not been confirmed to ensure that you have a place at the ceremony if needed.

### ***Which ceremony will I be invited to?***

As a general rule the final recommendation of your examiners, including confirmation that any amendments required have been satisfactorily completed, needs to be received by the Graduate Office by mid-June for Summer ceremonies and by mid-November for Winter ceremonies.

However, this is a general guide only and if you have any questions about precise deadlines or about whether you will be awarded in time for the next ceremony, you should contact the Graduate Office.

### ***When will I receive my degree certificate?***

Certificates are handed out to graduands at the ceremony or posted afterwards to those graduating in absentia.

Graduands who are unable to attend the degree congregation and wanting their certificate posting to them should note that there is a form they should use in their invitation pack. It is not possible to post your certificate unless you have completed and returned this form.

Graduands who are unable to attend the degree congregation and wanting to collect their certificate in person afterwards should note that there is a form they should use in their invitation pack. It is not possible to collect your certificate unless you have completed and returned this form.

Please note that certificates will normally be posted/available for collection one week following the end of the degree congregations.

## Appendix - Code of Practice for Research Degrees

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This Code applies to candidates applying for admission to a research degree at the University and to all students registered for a research degree regardless of mode of study or place of residence and to staff responsible for the supervision of such students. It should be read in conjunction with the *Regulations for Research Students*.

The Code also applies to students registered for University of Leicester research degrees at associated colleges, although these may, in addition, have their own codes of practice.

### Admission and Selection

1. All applications will be considered in line with the University's Code of Practice for Admissions.
2. The University's minimum entry requirement for a research degree is normally a first degree with at least upper second class honours or an equivalent qualification. For a candidate who does not meet this requirement the department should make a special case to the Admissions Office for referral to the Graduate Dean based on one or more of the following:
  - a) previous training and experience
  - b) published work
  - c) upper second class strengths shown in relevant courses in their first degree
  - d) the student having passed a qualifying examination of final honours standard
3. For candidates undertaking a research degree on a part-time basis, the department in which he or she wishes to register must be satisfied that the student will have access to the necessary resources and training, and that it is able to provide supervision at a distance.
4. Where a candidate is resident in the UK or undertaking study in the UK at the time of application an interview may form part of the selection process. If an interview is held at least two members of the academic staff of the relevant department(s) must be in attendance. In cases where an interview is not held departments should have fair and rigorous procedures in place to take account of academic requirements and supervisory capacity. Departments should also ensure that students have access to appropriate research training materials and the facilities necessary to undertake their research.



5. A recommendation to admit a candidate should be endorsed by two members of the academic staff of the department(s) concerned, one of whom shall normally be the Postgraduate Tutor and the other the proposed supervisor. The Postgraduate Tutor works with the Head of Department to proactively seek supervisors for prospective research students to ensure that the best possible research students are recruited.

The recommendation for admission will normally be as an Advanced Postgraduate Student, except where students are to be registered for a research degree with a taught element (Doctor of Education, Doctor of Social Sciences, Doctor of Engineering, or Doctor of Clinical Psychology).

6. The detailed requirements for the proposed programme of research frequently cannot be specified in advance, but in making the recommendation for an offer of a place the Head of Department should confirm the following points in the light of the proposed field of study and discussions with the student:

a) that the candidate is appropriately qualified for the proposed programme of research

b) that, on the information available, the proposed programme of research should be capable of being studied to the depth required to obtain the degree for which the candidate will be registered

c) that it might reasonably be expected that the proposed programme of research be completed and a thesis submitted within the maximum period of registration for the degree for which the student will be registered

d) that, in so far as can be predicted, appropriate resources (e.g., library, computing, laboratory facilities, equipment, technical assistance, and supervision (including alternative supervision to cover temporary absences of staff) will be available

7. The formal offer of admission can only be made by the Admissions Office based on the recommendation of the department. The recommendation of the department must include a brief outline of the proposed research study programme which will be incorporated into the University's offer letter. Departments may informally notify the student of their recommendation provided that this clearly indicates that the recommendation is subject to final approval by the University.

## **Designation of Supervisor**

8. Departments must specify the supervisory arrangements including the name of the main supervisor at the time it recommends an offer is to be made. Departments are strongly encouraged to operate a thesis committee system for their students or an equivalent method. A thesis committee is likely to include:

- I. a main supervisor, who carries primary responsibility for supervision
- II. a second supervisor or advisor who can offer further academic advice
- III. the Department's Postgraduate Tutor (or her/his nominee) who is involved in monitoring progress but is independent of the supervisory team

Departments must be able to supervise the number of students they accept in relation to the resources available and all other demands on staff. The main supervisor must be a member of the academic staff of the University or be a Recognised Teacher from an Associated Institution under the provision of Ordinance 29.

9. The advantage of the thesis committee system is that there is a single point of contact (the main supervisor), but there are also others who are familiar with the student's work and can support and monitor progress. For example, if a main supervisor is temporarily unable to continue supervising a student, the second supervisor or advisor can assume the role of the main supervisor.

10. A member of staff under probation should not usually be appointed as the sole supervisor. However, in order to promote research in new areas and to assist in building up research teams, it may be appropriate to appoint a suitably qualified probationer as the main supervisor. In such cases, the supervision should be monitored and assisted by a senior member of staff. More generally, the appointment of a member of staff on probation as a joint supervisor is to be encouraged in the interests of staff training and development.

11. There may be occasions where it is appropriate to appoint an additional supervisor who is not a member of staff of the University. The appointment of associate supervisors requires the approval of the Graduate Dean. In cases where an associate supervisor is appointed it should be clear that full control over the supervision rests with the University and there must always be a named supervisor who is a member of the academic staff of the University.

## **Supervision of Students on Industrial-based Projects**

12. Where a student is undertaking a research degree based in industry or another organisation an associate supervisor should be appointed to provide advice to the student on a day-to-day basis. The Head of Department should ensure that such a supervisor is appropriately qualified and experienced to undertake the supervision. Before the project has commenced the University should ensure that there is a clear agreement in writing on the following issues:

- ▶ the roles of the respective supervisors, noting that ultimate responsibility for supervision and monitoring of progress rests with the University
- ▶ the academic and industrial objectives of the project
- ▶ the resources, facilities and equipment which will be made available to the student
- ▶ the schedule of industrial and research training, including an agreement on the periods the student will be required to attend the University
- ▶ a schedule for regular tripartite meetings between the student and supervisors
- ▶ the use which will be made of the research and its results, including publications and any issues of confidentiality, intellectual property rights or other areas of sensitivity

### **Choice of Research Topic**

13. The translation of field of study to a more specific research topic should be undertaken following consultation between the student, the designated supervisor(s) and the student's thesis committee as soon as possible in light of what is appropriate for the discipline and not later than the time of transfer to a specific research degree. The discussions of this may precede registration. The supervisors have a responsibility to ensure that delay in determining the topic is kept to a minimum and that the Head of Department is kept informed. In many disciplines the choice of research topic may be determined by the research in progress within the department or by an external funding body. Industrial needs may in appropriate circumstances influence the choice of research fields and topics.

### **Induction**

14. Departments should provide a formal induction programme for all newly registered research students. Students should be introduced to the necessary resources for their work (e.g. library facilities, computing etc.) and there should be a thorough discussion of both the demands of the research programme and the mutual obligations of student and supervisor in line with the regulations and this code of practice. Students should also be provided with information on the research interests of members of staff and how research is organised in the department, including, for example, details of any research seminars.

15. Supervisors of part-time students, registered either in the UK or overseas, should discuss the local facilities required to undertake the research and should advise how students may gain access to these facilities, providing appropriate documentation where required.

## Research Training

16. Departments are required to provide formal research training for all research students to ensure that they acquire and enhance the skills they require to undertake their research successfully. Research training may be provided by a variety of means, but will usually include attendance at Graduate School and College training programmes in addition to research training programmes offered at departmental level or equivalent provision for those undertaking their studies at a distance. Each student and supervisor should formally agree the requirements at the commencement of the student's studies in consultation with the student's thesis committee, and this should be documented in a Training Plan completed and agreed at the first thesis committee meeting. Part-time students should be encouraged to attend the training courses provided but departments should also provide alternative ways for students to acquire the necessary skills, for example through the use of distance learning materials.

17. Departments will be required to provide details of their research training programme to the Graduate Dean each year as part of their annual reports on research students. Research training programmes should include:

- ▶ research skills and techniques
- ▶ research environment
- ▶ research management
- ▶ personal effectiveness
- ▶ communication skills
- ▶ networking and team-working
- ▶ career management

## Supervision

19. Research students should be left in no doubt as to what is required of them. In particular, it must be emphasised that a thesis should be the student's own work and that, within the framework of supervision, students have the responsibility for bringing forward and developing their own ideas. A clear understanding between student and supervisor needs to be established at an early stage about the supervisor's responsibilities in relation to the student's written submissions. The understanding must cover the nature of guidance or comment a supervisor will offer within the general principle that a thesis must be the student's own work.

20. Supervisors should ensure that all students understand the requirements of the degree for which they will be registered. Particular care should be taken to ensure that international students, whether registered full-time or part-time resident overseas, fully understand the concept of a British research degree, particularly requirements relating to originality and the viva voce examination associated with research degrees.

21. In the case of part-time students resident outside of the local region supervisors should ensure that there are adequate means available whereby formal consultation can take place on a regular basis. Use should be made of all forms of technology, such as e-mail to facilitate this process. Supervision should take place on a regular basis and may include visits by the student to the University or by the supervisor to the student as appropriate. Individual programmes may also have requirements for attendance at residential schools.

22. Where students are undertaking research as part of a team the supervisor should ensure that students are fully aware of how their own research fits into the group as a whole. It may be particularly useful to arrange regular meetings to review the relationship between individual and group research.

23. The responsibilities of the supervisor include:

a) emphasising to the student the need for familiarity with the code of practice and postgraduate regulations

b) giving guidance about:

- ▶ the nature of research and standard expected
- ▶ the planning of the research programme
- ▶ literature and sources
- ▶ attendance at taught classes, including the research training programme
- ▶ requisite techniques (including arranging for instruction where necessary)
- ▶ the need to develop oral and written communication skills
- ▶ the problems of plagiarism (including drawing attention to the appropriate regulations)

c) monitoring the progress of the research through regular consultations in accordance with departmental and University policy, and in light of discussion of arrangements with the student

d) being accessible at mutually convenient times when the student may need advice

e) giving detailed advice on the necessary completion dates of successive stages of the work so that the whole may be submitted within the scheduled time. The planning of the research programme should anticipate a final draft of the thesis being prepared by the end of a three-year period of full time research or an equivalent period for part-time study

f) emphasising the importance of timely submission both in terms of good academic practice and in relationship to University and research council requirements and explaining the consequences of failing to meet the appropriate deadlines

g) requesting written work as appropriate, and returning such work with constructive criticism and in reasonable time

h) reading the whole of the final draft of the thesis, giving advice about appropriate length and ensuring that the thesis complies with regulations on the length of theses

i) arranging as appropriate for students to talk about their work to staff or at graduate seminars, and to have practice in oral presentations, bearing in mind the demands of the oral examination

j) ensuring that the student is made aware of inadequacy of progress or of standards of work below that generally expected. If at any time the supervisor is of the opinion that the student is unlikely to achieve the degree for which the student is registered, the supervisor must notify the Head of Department in writing without delay

24. The responsibilities of the student include:

a) familiarising themselves with this code of practice and postgraduate regulations

b) taking the initiative in raising problems or difficulties, however elementary they may seem

c) discussing with the supervisor the type of guidance and comment found most helpful

d) agreeing a mutually convenient schedule of meetings

e) attending the research training programme and any other taught classes as required by the department

f) maintaining and sustaining the progress of the work in accordance with the stages agreed with the supervisor, including in particular the prompt presentation of material, written in good, clear English, as required in sufficient time for comments and discussion before proceeding to the next stage (in this context written material includes interim reports, drafts of theses, running commentaries on the evolution of the argument, appraisal of written sources, laboratory results)

g) complying with departmental reporting procedures and providing an annual progress report to the Graduate School

h) taking the initiative to contact other students in the research area and arrange and take part in informal discussions alongside more formal research activities

i) deciding when to submit the completed thesis, taking due account of the supervisor's opinion which is, however, advisory only. The supervisor's support of the decision to submit must not be taken as any guarantee that the degree sought will in fact be awarded. The recommendation to award rests entirely with the examiners

j) ensuring that the thesis complies with all regulations including those relating to format and maximum lengths

k) ensuring timely submission of the thesis to comply with University and Research Council requirements

25. Each Head of Department must appoint a Postgraduate Tutor. In order to avoid conflict of interests where students are supervised by the department's Postgraduate Tutor, the Head of Department should appoint another member of staff as postgraduate tutor for these students. The Postgraduate Tutor works with the Head of Department to negotiate and meet the University's admissions targets for research students and is responsible for assisting with the building and maintenance of the critical mass of research students within the Department. The Postgraduate Tutor will be responsible for:

- ▶ research student recruitment, including seeking supervisors and thesis committee members
- ▶ establishing and organising departmental progress monitoring procedures
- ▶ coordinating annual assessments and reports to the Graduate Office, particularly the transfer of registration at the end of the APG period
- ▶ working with supervisors to ensure timely completion and thesis submission
- ▶ ensuring that research students follow University regulations and any requirements specified by funding bodies, such as the Research Councils
- ▶ monitoring student participation in research training during the APG period
- ▶ implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of this Code of Practice within the department
- ▶ overall pastoral care of research students
- ▶ mediating on any disputes between supervisors and student
- ▶ acting on the student's behalf before appropriate University authorities
- ▶ informing all postgraduate students of his/her functions and availability for consultation
- ▶ ensuring regularity of contact between supervisors and students

## Reporting Procedures

26. Departments are required to operate a formal procedure for the assessment of progress for each research student which includes the following components:

a) twelve months (twenty-four months for part-time students) after initial registration full time students will be required to submit a progress report with components, such as literature surveys and conclusions to preliminary research questions, which reflect their work to date. The report should also contain a research plan for the remaining period of registration, including research objectives, methods and an approximate time plan for reaching these objectives by the end of the maximum registration period

b) the report will be read and assessed by the supervisors and at least one other member of the academic staff. The student will then attend an oral examination or present a seminar in the department and answer questions. The assessment of the examination or seminar will form the basis of the recommendation from the department to the Graduate Dean for transfer of registration from Advanced Postgraduate status to a named research degree, an extension of APG status or termination of registration

c) twenty-four months after registration full-time students' progress will be assessed by the supervisors and co-examiner of the first year report. This assessment will include a careful study of the further work needed for completion of the thesis and an agreement of a time scale for completion

d) each student, supervisor and Head of Department is required to make an annual report to the Graduate School on request which will include details of individual students' progress, research training and departmental procedures

If, at any stage, the supervisor has serious doubts about the ability of students to achieve the degree for which they are registered the Head of Department should be notified immediately. Following consideration of the circumstances the Head of Department may then decide to report the student under the regulation concerned with "Neglect of Academic Obligations". In some cases, more supportive procedures (e.g., suspension of registration, reformulation of topic, transfer to a lower degree, or mutually agreed withdrawal with open testimonial) may be more appropriate.

## Complaints Procedures

27. If a student feels that the research programme is not proceeding satisfactorily or legitimate expectations are not being met the student may utilise the University's Complaints Procedures as detailed in the Postgraduate Regulations.



## Final Examination

28. When a student submits notification of intention to submit a thesis the Graduate Office notifies the relevant Head of Department and requests that an examiners' nomination form be completed. The Head of Department, after consultation with the supervisor, will make a recommendation to the Graduate Dean which, if satisfactory is submitted to Senate for approval.

29. There should always be at least two examiners, one of whom must be an external examiner. Internal examiners must be members of the academic staff of the University or hold Recognised Teacher Status. The candidate's supervisor may not act as the internal examiner. If, in exceptional circumstances, it is not possible to appoint an internal examiner a second external examiner must be appointed.

30. In cases where the candidate is a member of the staff of the University and there is a possibility that the integrity of the examination may be considered to be compromised by the appointment of an internal examiner, the examination team will comprise two external examiners. An independent Chair will oversee the conduct of the viva voce examination but will not examine the thesis. Examination teams will be approved by the Graduate Dean in the first instance, who will determine whether the appointment of two external examiners is required.

31. In addition to the two examiners a Chair may be appointed for a viva voce examination if the Graduate Dean or either of the examiners considers this appropriate or desirable. For example, the appointment of a Chair may be requested where the examining team has relatively little experience of examining UK research degrees or where there are two external examiners. The Chair will usually be a senior member of the academic staff of the department in which the candidate is registered. He or she will not be required to examine the thesis but will be present to ensure that the viva is conducted in accordance with University procedures and standard practice for the discipline. The Chair will be required to submit a brief written report on the conduct of the viva.

32. The viva voce examination will be held at the University. In exceptional circumstances the viva voce examination may be conducted at another appropriate location, with the permission of the Graduate Dean. The supervisor should be available at the time of the viva voce examination to assist the examiners if required. The supervisor may be invited to be present during part or all of the viva voce examination, at the discretion of the examiners.

33. The internal and external examiners should prepare independent written comments on the thesis prior to the oral examination. After the oral examination, a joint report should be prepared including, where appropriate, an agreed recommendation. Where the original examiners are unable to reach agreement then a further external examiner will be appointed. The joint report accompanied by the examiners' individual reports should be submitted to the Graduate Office.

34. The examiners' recommendations will take one of the following forms:
- a) immediate award of the degree
  - b) award of the degree subject to minor amendments to be approved by the internal examiner within one month of the viva
  - c) award of the degree subject to major amendments to be approved by the internal examiners within six months of the viva
  - d) for revision (with detailed advice about requirements) and resubmission for the original or lower degree (re-submission to take place within six months to twelve months as recommended by the examiners)
  - e) award of a lower degree
  - f) fail with no right of re-submission
35. In recommending either resubmission (for the original or lower degree) or the award of a lower degree the examiners may take the wishes of the candidate into account. Although this can be discussed at the time of the oral examination, the student should not be required to give an immediate decision but should be given a reasonable time for reflection. The student's preference should be made known to the examiners prior to their recommendation being submitted to the Graduate Office. It should be made clear to the student that the examiners are not bound to follow the student's preference.

### **Appeals**

36. Any student whose registration is terminated or who is recommended for the award of a lower degree or who is recommended for resubmission for a lower degree will be notified of the University's appeal procedures by the Graduate Office. These procedures are set out in the Postgraduate Regulations.

### **Conferral**

37. All degrees will be conferred at the degree congregation immediately following the formal award of the degree by the Senate of the University.

For further information, please contact:

The Graduate School  
University of Leicester  
University Road  
LEICESTER  
LE1 7RH

Email: [graduatedean@le.ac.uk](mailto:graduatedean@le.ac.uk)  
Web: [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool](http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/gradschool)