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11.1B CODE OF PRACTICE

All Research Degree Programmes

POLICY COVERSHEET

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CARDIFF METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

CODE OF PRACTICE

ALL RESEARCH DEGREE PROGRAMMES

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This Code of Practice sets out the overall responsibilities and expectations of all those engaged in the following research degree programmes at Cardiff Metropolitan University (hereinafter referred to as the University):

Master of Philosophy (MPhil)

Master's by Research (MRes)

Master of Philosophy to Doctor of Philosophy (MPhil to PhD)

Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

PhD by Published Works

Professional Doctorate through one of the following pathways:

Doctor of Professional Practice [DProf];

Doctor of Business Administration [DBA];

Doctor of Education [EdD];

Doctor of Sustainable Built Environment [DSBE];

Doctor of Engineering [DEng]

Doctor of Applied Health [DAH]

Doctor of Design [DDM].

Doctor of Education (Wales) (EdD)

Taught Doctorate through one of the following pathways:

Doctor of Sports Coaching [DSC];

Doctor of Management [DMan];

Doctor of Applied Forensic Psychology [D.Foren.Psych]

- 1.2 This document sets out the guiding principles and standards of good practice which underpin the University's commitment to its Doctoral Researcher community. It is not, however, intended to provide comprehensive details of the day-to-day processes associated with research degree study at the University and should, therefore, be read in conjunction with the Doctoral Research Degree Regulations, for Taught and Professional Doctorate Researchers - the relevant supplementary regulations, and the Doctoral Researcher Handbook. All documents are available on the Doctoral Academy to view online or to download.

- 1.3 The Code aims to ensure that the highest standards of integrity and professionalism are observed in the conduct of research and that appropriate standards and quality are consistently maintained for all research degree programme awards offered by the University.
- 1.4 The Code is reviewed regularly and informed by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) UK Quality Code, external research sector guidance and University strategy, policy and regulatory sources.

2. UNIVERSITY PRINCIPLES FOR RESEARCH

- 2.1 As stated in the University's Research Governance Framework, the University recognises its obligation to ensure that all those involved in research at the institution are engaged in the deepening and broadening of knowledge and understanding by expert, responsible and professional means.
- 2.2 As an integral part of the research community, Doctoral Researchers and staff engaged in research should incorporate the principles and practices set out in the Research Governance Framework into their work and maintain exemplary standards of academic practice and honesty in all aspects of their research.
- 2.3 The principles include *Responsibility, Honesty, Openness, Accountability, Acknowledgement, Rigour, and Sustainability*.
- 2.4 The underlying practices include (but are not limited to):
 - The maintenance of open and honest professional standards in their research by ensuring that research methods and results are open to scrutiny, discussion and debate.
 - The employment of rigorous research methods incorporating careful and reflective processes of discovery and interpretation.
 - Compliance with the University Ethics Framework and all processes related to ethics approval of research.
 - A responsibility to maintain awareness of the legal and policy requirements which regulate their field of study.
 - Early consideration of how data arising from their research will be stored and managed.
 - A familiarity with the institution's sustainability policy and policies related to it.

3. QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES FOR RESEARCH DEGREES

- 3.1 The University operates a robust system of academic governance which ensure the academic standards and quality provision of research degree programmes offered. Information flow, both vertically and horizontally is facilitated via the following committees:

Academic Board: is the most senior executive decision-making body for matters relating to the academic provision of the University. It is responsible for major decisions relating to the strategic development of programmes of study and for the quality and standards of learning, teaching and research. It is also responsible for the on-going enhancement of the student experience, student engagement and graduate employability.

Research & Innovation Committee (R&IC): has responsibility for overseeing all aspects of institutional research, innovation and research degree registration and administration. It receives reports from the Research Degrees Group on its activities and endorses (or otherwise) changes proposed by that group regarding the management of research degree programmes.

Research Degrees Group (RDG): reports directly to R&IC and is responsible for: the governance of Doctoral Researcher support and progression; the provision of training for Doctoral Researchers, Supervisors, and Chairs and Examiners of Research Degrees; reviewing School Research Degree Group reports and Doctoral Researcher Examination Arrangements; and reviewing, annually, regulations relating to research degrees. As such it is the primary institutional body involved with the day-to-day progress and monitoring of research degree activity.

School Research Degree Group (SRDG): Each School has a SRDG which is responsible for the consideration and approval of most research degree related matters. These matters include: applications for enrolment; supervisory arrangements; Progression Reviews; applications to change degree mode, type or length; applications to change supervisory arrangements; and applications to withdraw from study. The SRDG will also consider Proposed Examination Arrangements for Doctoral Researchers, with decisions made at School RDGs fed directly to the University RDG.

Academic & Quality Standards Committee (AQSC): has the responsibility for the maintenance of standards and assurance of quality within the University's taught and research degree programmes. A link with RDG is maintained via a representative of the RDG being identified as a member of the AQSC.

3.2 Key areas related to research degree provision at the University which are monitored via the academic committee structure outlined above are:

- The provision of an appropriate research environment.
- The selection, admission and induction of Doctoral Researchers.
- The provision of appropriate and adequate supervision.
- The monitoring and review of Doctoral Researchers' progress.
- The development of Doctoral Researchers' research and other skills.
- The provision of appropriate assessment procedures.
- The reviewing and monitoring of the quality of provision using internal and external feedback including student representation and feedback.
- The provision of appropriate processes for dealing equitably and efficiently with problems, allegations of research misconduct, complaints, appeals and reviews.

3.3 Both the RDG and the R&IC include representation from the Doctoral Researcher body whilst Academic Board includes representation from the wider student body.

4. RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT

- 4.1 The University Research & Innovation Strategy sets out the institution's vision for the direction of research.
- 4.2 The University aims to foster a research environment in which Doctoral Researchers are fully supported in carrying out their research activities, in acquiring appropriate skills related to both their personal and professional development and in forming meaningful professional relationships with other researchers both within and outside the institution.
- 4.3 Before an applicant is offered a place to study at the University, every effort will be taken to ensure that there is adequate expertise available to provide supervisory support for the research topic and sufficient availability of technical and administrative support. This being the case, an offer to study will only be made to prospective students who meet the University's eligibility criteria and whose project relates to an area of proven research activity at the University.
- 4.4 The University will ensure that, once enrolled, Doctoral Researchers are provided with sufficient resources to complete their studies within the appropriate maximum period of candidature. The Doctoral Researcher Handbook provides details of the minimum resource expectations for Doctoral Researchers in relation to access to workspace, support services and training.

5. APPLICATION, ADMISSION AND INDUCTION

- 5.1 The application process is designed to ensure that individuals offered a place at the University are suitably qualified and prepared to complete their research project successfully and within the appropriate maximum period of candidature. Information regarding awards offered by the University is provided in paragraph 1.1.
- 5.2 The admissions process is clear and consistently applied. Full details of entrance requirements are included in the Doctoral Research Degree Regulations and information regarding all aspects of the admissions process is fully accessible via the University's website.
- 5.3 The University requires that all applications are evaluated by at least two academic members of staff, normally members of the relevant SRDG. If the applicant is considered suitable and the proposed area of research can be supported within available supervisory capacity, the applicant will be invited to attend an interview. The interview will be conducted by at least two academics, both of whom have received appropriate training in selection and admissions procedures.
- 5.4 If the interview panel agrees that the applicant should be offered a place to study at the University, this decision will be forwarded to the Dean of School for approval. The School will make a decision based on consideration of the suitability of the applicant, the capacity and "subject fit" of the proposed supervisory team and the availability of sufficient funding and resources to support the applicant.
- 5.5 The applicant will be informed of the outcome of the interview process as soon as possible and normally within four weeks. Once offered a place to study, the applicant will be informed

when they are eligible to enrol and will be required to do so via the online enrolment process. Full details of the enrolment process are provided on the [University's website](#).

- 5.6 For the MPhil, MRes, PhD, Professional Doctorate and Applied Forensic Psychology programmes, the University offers three official enrolment points each academic year, normally in September, January and April. The PhD by Publication enrolment points are September and April. The Doctor of Sports Coaching and Doctor of Management programmes offer one enrolment point in September and October, respectively. Should a student enrol at another point in the year, their official start date will be the closest official enrolment point.
- 5.7 Newly enrolled research degree students will automatically receive an invitation to a Doctoral Researcher Meet and Greet Day and the Induction week. The Meet and Greet day is organised on the first day of enrolment. The induction week is organised two weeks after the Meet and Greet day.
- 5.8 The purpose of the Meet and Greet day is to provide Doctoral Researchers an early opportunity to engage with key members of staff who are involved with research degrees. The purpose of the Induction week is to provide an introduction to Doctoral Research study at the University and to key topics which are relevant to the initial stages of the doctoral research journey. In addition to the university Induction Week, Doctoral Researchers will attend a School based induction event, the purpose of which is to provide a more localised introduction to the requirements of the specific subject field or discipline area.
- 5.9 At Induction, Doctoral Researchers will be provided with access to this Code of Practice as well as the regulations pertaining to the award for which they are enrolled and the Doctoral Researcher Handbook.

6. DOCTORAL RESEARCH MANAGER

- 6.1 The progression of Doctoral Researchers is managed and monitored via the online platform, Doctoral Research Manager ([DR Manager](#)). Access to DR Manager is linked to the Doctoral Researcher email account, details of which will be provided to the Doctoral Researcher following enrolment. All communication with Doctoral Researchers related to their programme of study, including alerts issued via DR Manager, will be via their Doctoral Researcher email account. Doctoral Researchers should, therefore, ensure that they check this email account on a regular basis, or make arrangements for all communication received via this account to be forwarded to an alternative address.
- 6.2 Processes completed within DR Manager are:
- For those enrolled prior to September 2020:
 - Production and approval of a Research Training Review
 - Production and approval of the Research Degree Proposal
 - Production and approval of Annual Monitoring Reports
 - Transfer from MPhil/PhD to PhD
 - For those enrolled from September 2020:
 - Production and approval of Progression Reviews
 - For all Doctoral Researchers:

- Recording of supervisory team meetings
- Requests to change the Doctoral Programme being studied
- Requests to make changes to a supervisory team
- Requests to make changes to the mode of study
- Requests to undertake a 'study break' or resume studies
- Requests to exceptionally extend the maximum candidature period
- Requests to withdraw from the programme
- Production and approval of Proposed Examination Arrangements
- Submission of thesis (or equivalent) and subsequent examination processes

6.3 Each process is linked to a workflow and most require input from the Doctoral Researcher, their supervisory team, the SRDG and, for some processes, the Chair of the University RDG in order to reach their conclusion. For Doctoral Researchers enrolled from September 2020, an Independent Progression Advisor (IPA) will also be involved in the Progression Review processes. Operational guides for using DR Manager are included on the DR Manager section of the Doctoral Academy.

7. SUPERVISION

- 7.1 The University views supervision as a partnership between the Doctoral Researcher and the members of their supervisory team, with all having rights and responsibilities as laid out in the Doctoral Researcher Handbook and the Doctoral Researcher Supervisor Handbook.
- 7.2 All Doctoral Researchers will have at least two supervisors and normally no more than three. At least one member of the supervisory team will be a member of the University's academic staff with a contract equivalent to at least 0.2 of a full time position. One of the supervisors will be appointed as Director of Studies or a Supervisory Team Coordinator (STC) and will have overall responsibility for the work of the supervisory team. More details on the roles can be found in the Doctoral Researcher Handbook and the Doctoral Researcher Supervisor Handbook.
- 7.3 A supervisory team will be identified as part of the application process by the relevant SRDG before a recommendation to offer a place to study is approved. In order for the supervisory team to be approved, its members must collectively have at least two successful Doctoral Degree completions at the level of the award on which the student will be enrolled. The team will also have knowledge of the proposed area of study and its theoretical background.
- 7.4 In order to ensure that Doctoral Researchers are afforded sufficient supervisory time, Approved Supervisors and Directors of Study are permitted to supervise a maximum number of students at any one time and the current supervisory load of members of the proposed team are considered before the team is approved. Currently, members of staff are permitted to supervise a total of eight Doctoral Researchers (FTE¹) with a maximum of six FTEs as a Director of Studies or Supervisory Team Coordinator². To facilitate the Doctoral Researcher's experience and with consideration of supervisor workload and enabling supervision across each school, the part time allocation for each Doctoral Researcher supervised is 0.8 FTE. More

¹ FTE is Full Time Equivalent. A full time Doctoral Researcher would equal 1

² the maximum of six supervisions as a DoS or STC is cumulative across both roles.

specific details on Maximum Supervision Capacity can be found in the Doctoral Researcher Supervisor Handbook.

- 7.5 Supervisory roles carry with them minimum requirements in terms of research activity and experience and the University RDG keeps a record of all those individuals who have been approved to carry out each role. All applications for supervisory roles will be considered and approved, or otherwise, by SRDG.
- 7.6 The criteria for approval of each Supervisory role is provided in the Doctoral Researcher Supervisor Handbook. Alongside the need to evidence achievement of the given criteria, applicants must also commit to specified training sessions organised by the University during the early stages of undertaking each role, and on an annual basis, thereafter.
- 7.7 Regular contact between the Doctoral Researcher and the supervisory team is essential to ensure timely progression and completion of studies. As a guideline, full time Doctoral Researchers should meet with at least one member of their team at least fortnightly. This is especially important in the early stages of the project.
- 7.8 Formal meetings between the Doctoral Researchers and members of their supervisory team are expected to be held at least six times per year, irrespective of the mode of study (i.e., full time or part time). The purpose of the meetings will be to review achievements and progress and to establish objectives for the next phase of the research. Meetings must be formally recorded by the Doctoral Researcher using DR Manager.
- 7.9 In instances where the Director of Studies or a Supervisory Team Coordinator is absent on extended leave, members of the relevant SRDG will work to ensure that sufficient levels of supervision are maintained. Depending on the circumstances, this could be via a change the membership of the team. More guidance on the processes to support extended leave are provided in the Doctoral Researcher Supervisor Handbook.
- 7.10 Where the Doctoral Researcher is unhappy with any aspect of the supervision they are receiving, in the first instance they should inform the School's Graduate Studies Lead (GSL). Where this is difficult or inappropriate, they should approach the School's Associate Dean of Research (ADR) or the University's Graduate Studies Lead.

8. PROGRESSION AND REVIEW ARRANGEMENTS

- 8.1 It is important that satisfactory progress is made throughout the enrolment period and that this is sufficient to maintain the likelihood of completion of the award within the applicable maximum candidature period. Supervisory teams play a crucial role in ensuring that Doctoral Researchers are enabled to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to make good progress on their programme of research. However, Doctoral Researchers and supervisors are jointly responsible for ensuring that the objectives of the research plan are kept under review and adjusted in light of any developments.
- 8.2 Progress is monitored primarily via formal Progression Reviews and informal meetings between the Doctoral Researcher and their supervisory team. For Doctoral Researchers enrolled from September 2020, formal Progression Reviews will include an IPA from the 6 month Progression Review, onwards. A proposed schedule of meetings should be agreed by

all parties at the start of the programme and should be in line with the University's requirements regarding the frequency of meetings (see paragraph 7.8). It is the joint responsibility of all members of the supervisory team and the Doctoral Researcher to ensure that the appropriate number of meetings occur.

- 8.3 All Doctoral Researchers are required to reenrol annually, on the anniversary of their initial enrolment. In order to do so, Doctoral Researchers enrolled prior to September 2020 must complete an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR). A Doctoral Researcher will not be able to progress onto the next year of study if a satisfactory AMR is not submitted. Doctoral Researchers enrolled from September 2020 onwards must successfully complete a Progression Review. More information regarding the Annual Monitoring and Progression Review process, respectively, is provided on the [Doctoral Research Regulations](#) and [Doctoral Researcher Handbook](#).
- 8.4 Information required for the AMR or Progression Review is to be provided electronically via DR Manager.
- For those enrolled prior to September 2020: The AMR is completed jointly on DR Manager by the Doctoral Researcher and their supervisors and will give details of progress against planned objectives, set objectives for the coming year and highlight any set-backs which may delay progress and ultimately, submission of the thesis.
 - For those enrolled from September 2020 onwards: The Doctoral Researcher is to meet with members of the supervisory team by month 1 (Launchpad) to identify objectives and a plan of work for the next five months. Then, a Progression Review is to be completed at Month 6, 12 and annually, thereafter. Prior to the Progression Reviews with the Supervisory Team and Independent Progression Advisor, information aligned to set criteria is to be uploaded to DR Manager by the Doctoral Researcher.
- 8.5 Within the AMR or Progression Review, Doctoral Researchers will have an opportunity to submit a confidential section in which they can comment on the facilities and resources available and raise any issues they feel unable to direct to their supervisory team. This section will be sent directly to the University's Director of Research & Graduate Studies.
- 8.6 In order for a candidate to progress to the next year of enrolment, the AMR or Progression Review must be approved by the SRDG. It is, therefore, important that the AMR or Progression Review is completed prior to the anniversary of initial enrolment, allowing sufficient time for its consideration by SRDG before the current enrolment period expires.
- 8.7 Should a Doctoral Researcher fail to complete an AMR or Progression Review and reenrol within 3 months of the date their enrolment is due, they will be withdrawn from their studies. It is, therefore, essential that the annual monitoring or progression process is started well in advance of the reenrolment date to allow time for its completion before the current enrolment period expires.
- 8.8 At the 12 month Progression Review (or the 24 month Progression Review for a part time Doctoral Researcher), a Doctoral Researcher who is enrolled on an MPhil/PhD basis will be required to establish if they have reached the level required to progress to PhD study.

9. THE DOCTORAL ACADEMY AND DOCTORAL RESEARCHER TRAINING

- 9.1 The Doctoral Academy online portal is the 'one-stop-shop' for Doctoral Researchers for all information about the programme, along with regular updates on training, events, wellbeing support, meetings and funding opportunities. Doctoral Researchers are required to engage with this portal on, at least, a weekly basis to keep up to date with opportunities and support on offer.
- 9.2 With regards to the training of Doctoral Researchers, the University is committed to providing regular high-quality sessions focusing on research, professional and personal skills development to ensure that Doctoral Researchers develop the intellectual, research and transferable skills they need to enhance their employability and underpin their career development.
- 9.3 At each Progression Review, Doctoral Researchers are tasked to discuss with members of their supervisory team and the Independent Progression Advisor their training needs to support successful progression. Training needs must be evaluated on DR Manager, through the training section that allows the Doctoral Researcher to assess skills (or competencies) identified via the Vitae Research Development Framework.
- 9.4 The University offers a fluid ongoing programme of training to Doctoral Researchers throughout the academic year. Details of all training sessions are promoted on the Doctoral Academy. A wide variety of subjects are taught, and those subjects are recorded and made available on the 'Past Training Sessions, Videos and Resources' section of the Doctoral Academy. Many sessions are taught 'live' throughout the Academic year at different times of the day (including evenings) both through Microsoft Teams and through face-to-face delivery, to make the sessions as accessible as possible for all students. Often, with key sessions delivered each quarter. Sessions can be 'booked' through first selecting the link provided within the advertised training session on the Doctoral Academy (that will take the Doctoral Researcher to a registration page on DR Manager), and then registering interest via the registration page on DR Manager.
- 9.4 The Doctoral Researcher Group organises an annual symposium which provides Doctoral Researchers with an opportunity to showcase / present their work at different stages of its development, and to receive feedback from active researchers and peers. The event also includes keynote sessions addressing aspects of researcher roles and professional development.

10. EXAMINATION

- 10.1 Detailed information regarding the procedures for preparation and submission of a thesis and of the examination process are provided in the Doctoral Researcher Handbook and the Examination Centre of the Doctoral Academy.
- 10.2 All Doctoral Researchers are examined based on their work via an independent review of their thesis (or equivalent) by two examiners, followed by a *viva voce* examination. The viva will

normally take place within two months of the date on which the examiners received the thesis.

- 10.3 A Proposed Examination Board should be submitted at least six months before expected submission of the thesis via DR Manager to be reviewed by the SRDG and the University's RDG, which has the responsibility to approve it, or otherwise.
- 10.4 The Examination Board will consist of an independent Chair and two examiners. In most cases one examiner will be an employee of the University and one will be external to the University. However, in cases where the Doctoral Researcher holds an employment contract with the University, including an HPL contract for more than six hours per week (averaged across the academic year), both examiners will be external to the University. The Chair shall be a member of staff at the University, normally from the same school (or equivalent) as the Doctoral Researcher but cannot be a member of the supervisory team. The Chair will be responsible for ensuring that the examination is conducted appropriately, in line with University's procedures for Doctoral Level Examination. Full details of the criteria for appointment of examiners are available in the Doctoral Researcher Handbook and the Examination Centre on the Doctoral Academy.
- 10.5 Prior to the *Viva Voce*, each of the examiners will submit an independent report on the thesis (or equivalent) aligned to the criteria for the award, via DR Manager. Examiners will not have sight of each other's reports until both have been submitted.
- 10.6 The Doctoral Researcher may elect to have one of their supervisors present at the *viva voce* as an observer.
- 10.7 Following the *viva voce* the examiners will complete a joint report, composed by the Chair, confirming the outcome and include an explanation of the reasoning which led to the decision. The report will make clear any required amendments and will include details of the timeframe within which any amendments must be submitted via DR Manager. The University provides examiners with a set of outcomes from which they must select the most appropriate option. Details of the outcomes available to examiners are included in the Doctoral Research Degree Regulations.
- 10.8 The Doctoral Researcher will normally be informed verbally of the decision of the examination panel on the same day as the Viva takes place. Written confirmation of the Board's recommendation will be provided to the University's Research Degrees Group within seven days of the examination.

11. STUDENT REPRESENTATION AND FEEDBACK MECHANISMS

- 11.1 Whilst Doctoral Researchers are considered to be students for the purposes of their studies, they have long been considered as academic colleagues by the University. The University, therefore, strives to recognise the professional status of Doctoral Researchers and afford them similar access to resources as provided to staff.
- 11.2 The University values the contribution of its Doctoral Researcher community to the research environment at the university and is committed to working in partnership with Doctoral Researchers to improve and enhance their experience whilst at the university.

- 11.3 Doctoral Researchers are encouraged to engage with the Doctoral Researcher Group which organises academic and social events and acts as a conduit via which individuals can interact with senior research managers at the University.
- 11.4 Both the RDG and R&IC include representatives from the Doctoral Researcher community, as does the University Ethics Committee.
- 11.5 The University participates in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), an annual HE sector wide survey of the views and experiences of the Doctoral Researcher community. Feedback received via PRES is reviewed by the institution and used to enhance the student learning experience.
- 11.6 As previously documented, Doctoral Researchers are given the opportunity to comment on their experience at University as part of the annual monitoring or Progression Review process. Comments are directed to the University Director of Research & Graduate Studies who will follow up on any reported difficulties or issues.
- 11.7 Feedback is sought from External Examiners on the assessment and examination process. Any comments received are considered by the RDG who will take action accordingly.

12. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

- 12.1 The University is committed to investigating any complaints received thoroughly and in confidence.
- 12.2 Doctoral Researchers are encouraged to discuss any issues with their supervisors in the first instance but if this is not feasible, they should contact the Graduate Studies Lead or Associate Dean of Research (ADR) in their School. In instances where the Doctoral Researcher would like to discuss an issue outside the school in which they are based they should contact the University's Graduate Studies Lead.
- 12.3 The institution has documented procedures for formal complaints and appeals which are detailed in the Academic Handbook.