School of Geosciences

Postgraduate Research Students

Procedural Guide and Handbook

Academic session 2014-2015

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University of Aberdeen

School of Geosciences

Introduction

Postgraduate research students are important and highly valued members of the School of Geosciences. They may be registered for Higher Degrees in the School’s constituent disciplines: Archaeology, Geography and Environment and Geology and Petroleum Geology. It may be difficult to appreciate this with demanding supervisors and a seemingly never ending body of literature to be read! Research can be a solitary, and sometimes a lonely process, which is why support from the research community within the School, both staff and students, contributes significantly to successful completion of a research degree.

In terms of its relationship with postgraduate research students, the School’s goals are:

- to promote the expertise and professional development of every postgraduate research student
- to encourage their full integration into the life of the School

Professional development is achieved primarily through the evolution of one’s skills training and research activity. Initially this development is likely to be focused around interaction with supervisors but as your research develops further professional development will be gained through association with other researchers both within and outwith the School. Postgraduates are expected to affiliate themselves with relevant professional and research organisations and to participate in conferences and other research activities taking place inside and outside the University of Aberdeen. Professional development is also fostered by completing a programme of generic skills training. There are a number of active research seminar series across the School and postgraduates are expected to attend. Do not be afraid to push yourself beyond your area of study, you never know where the next idea comes from! Furthermore, we also encourage research students to undertake some (paid) part-time teaching as demonstrators and tutors, where possible, for undergraduate courses during the course of their students. Formal training for these duties is provided by the University.

The integration of research students into the administrative structure of the School is achieved via the School Postgraduate Committee, a forum whereby postgraduates may bring relevant matters to the attention of the School Management, via the research student representative. In addition, separate Student-Staff Liaison Committees are held for the research students in St Mary’ and Meston.

We hope that you feel at home and have a successful and enjoyable research career in the School.

Prof David Jolley
Head of School of Geosciences
January 2015
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1. Introduction to postgraduate study and the nature of PhD, M.Phil. and M.Sc. by research theses

The School of Geosciences, comprising the disciplines of Archaeology, Geography and Environment, and Geology and Petroleum Geology, places great value on the contribution made to the School by our postgraduates both in academic and social matters.

Postgraduate research is very demanding of time and resources, both on the part of the students and on the part of the School and its staff, so we want to maximise the benefits on both sides. The School is committed to provide high quality guidance in academic and procedural matters, so that after their studies are completed research students leave Aberdeen having obtained both a valuable qualification and skills training that will stand them in good stead for their future career. For the School and its staff it is important that we have the commitment of our students to ensure efficient output of top quality and motivated graduates, so we retain our reputation and that we continue to attract highly capable applicants to our postgraduate school.

We place a high priority on ensuring that the research undertaken by research students meets high academic standards and the requirements and expected standards of our clients, sponsors and grant-awarding bodies. Furthermore it is important that student research projects conducted in the School are finished on time.

Research students in the School may undertake the following degrees: Master of Science by research – MSc by research (12 months full-time/ 24 months part-time); Master of Philosophy – MPhil (24 months full-time/ 48 months part-time) or Doctor of Philosophy – PhD (at least 36 months full-time/ 60 months part-time. The requirements of those three different research degrees are outlined below.

What is a PhD Thesis?
The PhD thesis is the culmination of at least 36 months full-time (or 60 months part-time) research. The thesis has a form of presentation different from that of a published paper or review. The author of a thesis is, among other things, proving that he or she can conduct research, is capable of independent and critical thought, and can see the work in relation to the work of others.

A candidate for the degree of PhD should demonstrate an awareness and understanding of the most current literature directly relevant to the topic as well as in related areas of significance. S/he should demonstrate the capacity to make objective judgements and to show how her/his work relates to the work of others in the same field. The reference list must be full, up-to-date and accurate. Crucially the thesis should contain a “significant contribution to knowledge” but there are no hard and fast criteria to assess this. A good way of gauging this is the extent to which the thesis is publishable. Normally a satisfactory PhD thesis might be expected to form the basis for one or more articles in recognised refereed research journals, book chapters or perhaps a monograph which might be produced by a specialist publisher. If the findings presented in the thesis have been recently superseded in the literature, the candidate is expected to justify their presentation. It is good practice to organise the presentation of data in the thesis with publication in mind.

A thesis is always expected to display a satisfactory degree of originality. For example, a candidate may have posed an important new problem or have addressed an existing problem in a novel and useful way (e.g. using an innovative methodological approach). The research for the thesis may have investigated previously-ignored material, or offered new significant insights about issues which have been examined by other researchers. A candidate may have
developed new techniques for investigating issues, or may have applied appropriate techniques to a new set of problems. Replications of previous investigations would be acceptable provided they incorporate important new elements in the design or execution of the investigation.

What is an M.Sc./M.Phil. thesis?
The M.Sc. and M.Phil. by research degrees require shorter periods of study (12 months full-time / 24 months part time and 24 months full-time / 48 months part-time respectively) and the submission of a shorter thesis. The actual standard of the work presented in the thesis should be comparable to Ph.D. Originality and publishability are important, and many M.Sc./M.Phil. theses have direct applicability since they are focused on a narrowly defined topic. The essential requirements for these degrees are that they address themselves in a disciplined manner to a specific topic, theme or phenomenon; they comprise a thorough, well researched, mature and original treatment and represent between one and two years of postgraduate study.

*An M.Sc. degree can be based upon a prescribed course linked to an independent thesis, or can be based upon a thesis alone, the latter being referred to as an MSc by research to which the comments above apply.

Plagiarism:
Your attention is drawn to the University statement on plagiarism, which is defined in the Academic Quality Handbook under Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Appendix 5.15a, section 2.1.h) as follows:

(h) Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the use, without adequate acknowledgement, of the intellectual work of another person in work submitted for assessment. A student cannot be found to have committed plagiarism where it can be shown that the student has taken all reasonable care to avoid representing the work of others as his or her own.
2. The School of Geosciences and Research Activity

The School of Geosciences is part of the College of Physical Sciences and occupies the St Mary’s Building and part of the Meston Building. At present the School comprises three disciplines: Archaeology, Geography and Environment and Geology and Petroleum Geology.

2.1 Research in Archaeology

Founded in 2007, the discipline of Archaeology is the newest in the University. The focus of research activity is the “Archaeology of the North” and builds on the existing strengths within the School and elsewhere in the University. Current research is being carried out within Scotland, northern Europe, the north Atlantic, Canada and Alaska, though projects are underway in other parts of the world as well. This approach is unique within the United Kingdom - it draws on the diverse archaeological resources within the region, and research activities ongoing within the University.

Within this broadly defined region, research in the department is organized along four interlocking themes:

- **Human interactions with northern environments** - how did individuals and communities adapt to, understand and transform the landscapes they moved and acted in?
- **Material culture, technology and vernacular architecture** - how and why did new kinds of objects, technologies and built structures emerge from, and spread into, the societies of the northern world?
- **The northern mind** - how do past and present societies in the north perceive and understand the world, how do they define themselves in it, and how do they express their beliefs and identities?
- **Interactions between northern populations** - how far did diasporas, colonisations and inter-community contacts define the long-term culture history of the northern world?

At a time when the contemporary world is beginning to cast its eyes northward in search of ever diminishing natural resources, Aberdeen is at the forefront of pushing the boundaries of our understanding of northern cultural diversity both in the past and present.

Aberdeen is at the heart of a region that is amongst the richest in the UK in terms of sites of outstanding archaeological interest and it is in close proximity to the World Heritage Sites in Orkney. The University's Marischal Museum has gained a prominent reputation in the archaeological world, with its substantial archaeological collections, conservation laboratory, exhibitions and lecture programme.

2.2 Research in Geography and Environment

Our research is broadly organized into two research themes.

**Human Geography**

The Human Geography Research Group is interdisciplinary, which is regarded as a strength, and coalesces around three cross-cutting themes: transport and mobility, digital society and rural change. See here for more details.

Group members are integral to the success of high profile, interdisciplinary research initiatives including:
The Rural Digital Economy Hub is one of three multi-million pound Research Council-funded research nodes. It involves all the Human Geography academic staff that variously supervises the work of a number of research fellows and research students. The dot.rural Hub is designed to have a transformative impact on the capacity of rural communities, business and agencies to engage with and utilise existing and emerging digital technologies across four major research themes: ‘Healthcare’, ‘Accessibility and Mobilities’, ‘Enterprise and Culture’ and ‘Natural Resource Conservation’ with each theme based on exemplar projects implemented UK wide.

Geography and Environment hosts the Centre for Transport Research (CTR) which focuses research on three broad themes: Transport, Energy and Environment, Transport and Society and Transport and the Digital Economy.

Physical Geography
This research cluster focuses upon a range of themes in Physical Geography and beyond, and forms part of the wider Earth Sciences Research Grouping. Physical Geography research comprises three themes:

- **Cryosphere and Climate Change** focuses its work mainly on glaciers and ice sheets, both past, present and future. Work is undertaken across a range of geographical location and the groups has a strong track record of work in contemporary glaciated environments such as Greenland, Norway, Svalbard, the Canadian High Arctic, and the Alps. Much research also focuses on palaeo-glaciation in the UK, Ireland, the North Sea and South Africa. Research is focused on empirical data collection both in the lab and the field and collaboration with the numerical modelling community.

- The *Northern Rivers Institute* focuses catchment science to help underpin sustainable water management. The group has a strong track record of work across Scotland with a network of monitoring and experimental field sites. There is also a strong international dimension with work in Zambia, Spain, the USA and New Zealand. Research focuses on the application of field-tracing and mathematical tracer-aided modelling in the characterisation of hydrological systems, and the ecohydrology of headwater catchments.

- **Palaeoecology** focuses on the reconstruction of long-term changes to environment, landscape and climate, with links to human activity during prehistory and early history. The group has a strong track record of working across the UK, but also in many Northern Landscapes especially associated with the Viking/Norse settlements around the North Atlantic, especially Greenland. Work in Patagonia and South Africa extends the geographical focus. Research concentrates in empirical data collection using palynology, plant macrofossils, non-pollen microfossils and geochemistry.

2.3 Research in Geology and Petroleum Geology
The discipline of Geology and Petroleum Geology at Aberdeen University is committed to being an international centre for Petroleum Geoscience research and training. More than 80% of research funding is industry generated, and our BSc and MSc graduate employment record is one of the best in the country.

The University of Aberdeen has a long and well-established reputation for Geology teaching and research, offering a full range of undergraduate courses, coupled with postgraduate
training through taught courses and by research. We carry out research in a wide range of geological fields; much of it applied to the petroleum industry, as befits a department located in the "Oil Capital of Europe".

There are seven specific research themes:

- Sediment Flux, Climate Change and Tectonics
- Tectonics and Structural Geology
- Mobile Substrates and Sedimentation
- Terrestrial Ecosystems
- Deep-water Frontiers
- Geofluids and Porous Media
- Meteorite Impacts and Astrobiology

**International Research and Training**
Extending our horizons beyond the North Sea to worldwide petroleum basins has led to the forging of links with numerous companies and institutions abroad. Initiatives involve governmental, research and multinational commercial organisations in Nigeria, Australia, Algeria, the Falkland Islands, the former Soviet Union, China and the Middle East, all contributing a flow of postgraduate and postdoctoral posts.

**Maintaining a Broad Research Base**
Despite the petroleum focus, maintaining a broad research and training base continues as a key objective. Metallogenesis and mineral exploration are important, and mineral geochemistry provides a valuable interdisciplinary link into petroleum research. Igneous petrogenesis, and geodynamics in relation to subduction and orogenesis, are growth areas. Palaeoenvironmental and palaeontological studies remain an important research theme. Geology and Petroleum Geology houses extensive collections of minerals (c. 10,000), rocks (c. 9,000) and fossils (c. 12,000).

Our Geoscience research is inherently process-based, multi-disciplinary and international. We support a vibrant and active postgraduate research programme at PhD level, and pride ourselves on the quality of the research training. There are five specific research themes - climate change, tectonics and sediment flux; terrestrial ecosystems; deep-water frontiers; geofluids and porous media; and meteorite impacts and astrobiology. Within these themes, there are several active research groups which provide a focus for research students, postdoctoral researchers and funding opportunities.
3. Overview of the management of postgraduate research

The management of postgraduate research is considered at three levels: the University/College of Physical Sciences; the School; and the home discipline of the students. Broadly speaking, the management of postgraduate research in the School of Geosciences is standardised, particularly in terms of progression requirements – see section 5.2. There are, however, some discipline-specific requirements of research students, the most important of which are outlined in 5.3 below.

3.1 University and College management of postgraduate research

Formal registration, payment of fees and registration with the Directorate of information Technology and the Library
New students ‘Joining Instructions’ sent by the Student Recruitment and Admissions Service which contain information about electronic registration, how to collect your student ID card and the procedures for becoming a registered user of the University’s electronic resources and the library.

Induction
The College of Physical Science runs an induction programme for all new research students in October (for students who start their degree in September/October) and in February/March (for students who start their degree after November). All new postgraduate research students, full and part-time are expected to attend induction. An induction session in each discipline is held as part of the College induction programme.

Changes to terms of study
Any requests for a change in the terms of your study, for example, a request to suspend studies, to extend the period of supervised study or to study off-campus, must be approved centrally by the University. The forms required to make changes to the terms of study request are available through the Infohub here.

Attendance, illness, absence and holidays
There are no set hours of work or holidays. Considerable flexibility and dedication are required for successful research and you should be prepared to work long hours – including working evenings and weekends – at some points of your research degree. You should keep your supervisor informed of your movements, for example, inform them of any periods of fieldwork away from Aberdeen and let them know when you intend to be on holiday. If you are unwell you should phone the office and inform them that you will not be in work. If you are off work for more than seven working days you should submit a medical certificate to the School Office.

It is important that the University is aware of any problems which might impede progress. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that both the supervisor and the University Secretariat (via the Postgraduate Office) are aware of any illness or other difficulty that has affected their ability to study and that appropriate documentation (for example, medical certificate is made available).
3.2 College of Physical Sciences Monitoring progress

The College of Physical Sciences, on behalf of the University, requires postgraduate research students and their supervisors to complete regular progress review paperwork. For an overview of PGR monitoring and progression see [here](#).

![College of Physical Sciences Full-Time PGR Monitoring Check List](image)

The check list below is based on the full-time monitoring framework and is provided as an aid:

<table>
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<th>Time Frame</th>
<th>Activity Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>At Month 0</td>
<td>Initial Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By End Month 3</td>
<td>Return “Initial Personal Development Plan Form”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Month 6</td>
<td>Return “Routine Monitoring Form” (Form A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Month 9</td>
<td>Submit a Report on your Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Month 10</td>
<td>Interview/Visa and/or Presentation on Research Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Month 18</td>
<td>Return “Routine Monitoring Form” (Form A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Month 21</td>
<td>Deliver a Research Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Month 22</td>
<td>Interview / Visa with Possible Report / Paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Month 30</td>
<td>Return “Routine Monitoring Form” (Form A)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Month 38</td>
<td>Return “Thesis Completion Form” (Form B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Month 42 (where required)</td>
<td>Return “Thesis Completion Form” (Form B)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Month 48 (where required)</td>
<td>Return “Thesis Completion Form” (Form B)</td>
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Students who have not submitted by this time will be expected to complete and return a “Thesis Completion Form” every 6 months until submission.
3.3. School based management of postgraduate research

The day-to-day management of postgraduate research is the responsibility of supervisors. The supervisors appointed to each research students are responsible for regularly advising and guiding the student in the selection of research training, the formulation and execution of the research proposal and, ultimately, the submission of the thesis. The frequency of supervision meetings is flexible, varying with the stage of the research. Generally, meetings are held every two weeks in the first year of study and every three or four weeks in the second year.

Two supervisors will be allocated at the beginning of the study and will normally continue to advise throughout the duration of the project. However, supervisory requirements may change as a student’s research interests evolve. In these circumstances requests will be considered for a change of supervisor(s). Supervision will normally be carried on a joint basis to ensure an agreed programme of study and to avoid the risks of ambiguous or conflicting advice. Joint supervision also ensures that if one supervisor is away from Aberdeen (for example, conducting research) the student should continue to have access to an on-campus supervisor. The relationship between study and supervisor is viewed as a key ingredient to the successful completion of a research thesis and it is essential that all parties put effort into the relationship and clarify expectations.

An advisory/progress review committee is appointed for each research student, comprising one member of the supervisory team, a member of academic staff from the student’s discipline and a member of staff from another discipline in the School. The role of this committee is outlined in Section 6, School of Geosciences Postgraduate Research Students Progression Arrangements below.

Each discipline has a PGR coordinator. They oversee research student admissions and keep a watching brief on the overall progress and welfare of research students. Individual students are able to discuss any general problems relating to the programme or any specific problems experienced which cannot be dealt with through the normal supervisory system. At a formal level, the research student coordinators can meet with research students to discuss their programme and other issues that may arise. The research student coordinators are: Dr Charlotta Hillerdal (Archaeology), Dr Brice Rea (Geography and Environment) and Prof John Howell (Geology and Petroleum Geology).

The supervisory system as outlined above is designed to support the research effort and act as a vehicle for problem resolution. In the unlikely event of issues arising which, for whatever reason, cannot be resolved through discussion with the supervisors, advisory/progress review committee or research student coordinators, students are free to raise them with another member of academic staff, the Chair of the School of Geosciences Postgraduate Committee, the Head of School, the College of Physical Sciences Graduate School Director, a College Postgraduate Officer or with external support services such as the University Counselling Service.

Note to students
Copies of all completed forms / progress documentation should be retained by the student and lead supervisor and a copy will be held in the students’ School file.

Completion of the Thesis
All students should aim to complete and submit their thesis within their period of supervised study (normally 36 months). The University allows, on application, a further 12 months extension period and permission to submit after the extension period has ended can only be

1 Unless there are exceptional circumstances, all research students should be assigned two supervisors, though one may act as a lead for the project.
requested if circumstances are well justified: the University’s expectation is that all full-time PhD theses be submitted no more than 48 months after the date of first registration. Extension period students are required to pay a registration fee to retain access to University facilities such as the library and e-resources.

**Supervised study, extension period and access to laboratory and office facilities**

Provision of facilities (work space in the School, computer etc.) will normally terminate at the end of the period of supervised study (normally a maximum of 48 months). Any need for extra time to complete writing-up should be identified by the student (in consultation with the project supervisors) at the 2½ year mark and a detailed request submitted in writing to the Graduate School not later than 3 months before termination of the supervised study period in order that a formal application for an extension period can be made. *The School is under no obligation to provide office space, a computer and access to other School facilities if a student has entered the extension period (year 4).*

On completion of their studies students are expected to clear their office and laboratory space. There is no obligation on the School to store/forward any items left in PGR offices and laboratories once a student has left.

Similar arrangements are in place for students completing MSc by research and MPhil by research degrees, on a pro-rata basis that reflects the length of their period of supervised study.

### 3.3.1 Student staff liaison committees and postgraduate research student representation on School and College Committees

There is a postgraduate student representative for PGR students in the School. This representative attends the School Postgraduate Committee and the College Postgraduate Committee. These committees meet several times a year and provide an opportunity for research students to raise any issues of concern to the PGR student body. The PGR representative should make themselves known to the student body and arrange to table items of concern to the above mentioned committees.

### 3.4 Discipline specific management of postgraduate research

**Human Geography research students: transfer from MRes to MPhil or PhD**

Research students commencing a PhD in Human Geography are required to complete a formal programme of research training in Year 1. Some students are admitted for the degree of MRes in the first instance. Those intending to continue to a higher research degree transfer at the end of the first year. Students who have already received appropriate research training at a postgraduate level, or who are exempted from the MRes due to workplace research experience, may be registered at the outset for an MSc by research with a view to transfer to PhD, an MPhil or a PhD.

Final decisions regarding upgrading to MPhil or PhD are taken once all marks for the MRes or components thereof are known OR when the supervisory team has been satisfied that the student is working a doctoral level (normally about 9 months after commencing their study). If an earlier assessment of progress is required, for example, to secure continuing funding, a provisional judgement will be made by the supervisors and advisory/ progress committee. Students who successfully complete the three discipline specific elements of the MRes may be awarded a Postgraduate Certificate in Research Methods in Human Geography.
4. School of Geosciences Postgraduate Research Students 
Progression Arrangements

Assessment for a research degree ultimately depends on an examination of the thesis and its defence in the presence of a panel of examiners appointed by the University. However, progress will be monitored, at College and School level, and where progress is unsatisfactory the University has the right to terminate a student's candidature for a research degree. Details are described below under PGR Monitoring. An overview of the monitoring process can be found [here](#).

The College monitoring framework includes provisions for the formal assessment of progress at two stages, the transitions between **year 1 and 2** and **year 2 and 3** (pro-rata for part-time students). To these provisions the School of Geosciences has added procedures for monitoring progress in the 3rd year (pro-rata for part-time students) and during the writing up period.

The progression arrangements for the School of Geosciences outlined below apply to *all* students registered for a research degree in the School but will not replace the University requirement that six-monthly Research Student Assessment Forms are completed (see below under Routine Monitoring). Students who are co-supervised at the James Hutton Institute may elect to follow either the School of Geosciences or the James Hutton Institute progress review requirements, but if the latter is chosen they are still required to give a formal research presentation to the School in as part of the transition between year 1 and 2 and between year 2 and 3 and complete the College of Physical Sciences progression paperwork at the end of years 1 and 2.

**PGR Monitoring**

*Initial progress*: at the end of the 3rd month of full-time registration (pro-rata part-time) students in discussion with their supervisors should have completed their Initial Personal Development Plan form, which will be emailed to students and supervisors by the College at the appropriate time.

*Routine Monitoring*: there are two elements of routine progression monitoring:

- **Element 1**: is managed by the College. It requires that students must fill out a routine monitoring form every 6 months (at month 6, month 12, month 18, etc.).

- **Element 2**: is governed by the School and is described below.

**Progression from Year 1 to Year 2**

By the end of the 8th month of full-time registration (pro-rata part-time) every research student in the School of Geosciences should be about to:

- give a *formal research presentation* to the School as part of the *School of Geosciences PGR Conference* in June^2^;

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^2^ Individual arrangements should be made for off-campus students and any on-campus student who is unable to present in the School/ Discipline research student presentations event, for example: if they have commenced their studies late in the academic year. For students unable to present their research at the PGR Conference, it is advised that presentations take place within the context of progress review interviews. Particulars for the conference will be circulated to the School.
• submit a **progress report** (c10 pages/ 3,500 words) that will include a summary of their research activities since commencing their degree, an introduction to their research project, an outline of the scope of their study, and an account of the development of their methodology. A work plan for the next 12 months and an account of their engagement with research training activities (generic, discipline specific and specialist) should be appended to the progress report. Students may append other written work, such as a draft literature review, to their progress report.

By the end of the 9th month of full-time registration (pro-rata part-time) students will have attended a **progress review interview**. The interview panel will normally comprise a member of their supervisory team and their **advisory panel** members. A minute taker will be available if requested. One of the advisory panel members will chair the meeting. With reference to the progress report prepared by the student, the panel will seek to confirm that the student has:

• developed an understanding of their research problem and/or has achieved sufficient background knowledge to proceed with their research;
• is familiar with, and understands, literature relevant to their research topic and wider research area and can identify work of significance to their research;
• demonstrated a capacity to conduct their research project;
• developed an ability to appraise research problems critically;
• successfully completed research training as agreed with the supervisory team.

If the supervisors and advisory panel are content with the student’s progress the student will be confirmed as on track for a PhD. If any concerns about the student’s progress are identified the student may be required to attend specific training courses or submit additional written evidence of their work. If necessary a formal note of the meeting may be prepared and made available to the student, supervisors and advisory panel members. If the student’s progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory the interview panel will meet with the Head of School and/or Chair of the School of Geosciences Postgraduate Committee and/or PGR coordinator for the student’s discipline to discuss options which will be communicated to the student in writing. In the event that the student is deemed to have the potential to submit for the degree of MSc by research they may continue their registration to complete that degree. Alternatively, if progress is deemed unacceptable the student will be advised to withdraw from study.

Following the progress review meeting the advisory panel will complete the College of Physical Sciences Graduate School **First Year Assessment Form**. One copy of this form should be lodged in the student’s School file (managed by Julie Forbes) and another copy should be sent to the Graduate School (managed by Cheryl Croydon). Please note that in cases where students have elected to go through the progress monitoring of institutions such as the James Hutton Institute this form must also be completed.

**Progression from Year 2 to Year 3**

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3 All research students will be assigned an advisory panel when they commence their studies. The panel will comprise two members of academic staff, one from the students’ discipline and one from another discipline within the School. It is also advised that a member of the supervisory team sit on the panel. Non-supervisory members of the advisory panel will be available to meet students to discuss any matter relating to their research.

4 Item 6.5 **Guidelines to be followed when dealing with PGRs making unsatisfactory progress** in the University’s Code of practice for Research Students, Supervisors, Heads of School, Heads of Graduate School and College Postgraduate Officers will be referred to.
By the end of the 20th month of registration (pro-rata part-time) students be about to:

- Give a second formal research presentation at the School of Geosciences PGR Conference in June. This presentation will be in the form of an academic poster.
- Submit a 4 page/c.1,500 word progress report in which the research activities undertaken over the previous 12 months are outlined. The report should include enough information to allow the advisory panel to understand the significance of the research, methodology, initial findings as well as next steps. Notably, the student should note any changes to their project (as outlined in their progress report from year 1). A work plan for the next 12 months, and any information regarding conference and seminar attendance etc. over the previous 12 months should be appended to the report. Copies of draft chapters, conference papers/posters, working papers (or other documents that illustrate progress), should be submitted if requested by the progress review panel.

By the end of the 21st month of registration (pro-rata part-time) students will have attended a second progress review interview (ideally involving the same interview panel as for the 9-month review). The progress report will form the basis of the discussion between the student and interview panel. If progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory a meeting will be held between the interview panel and the Head of School to discuss options. In the event that the student is deemed to have the potential to submit a thesis to be examined for the degree of MPhil or MSc by research they will be allowed to continue their registration with the intention of submitting an MPhil or MSc by research thesis. Alternatively, if progress is deemed to be unacceptable, the student will be advised to withdraw from study.

Following the progress review meeting the advisory panel will complete the College of Physical Sciences Graduate School Second Year Assessment Form. One copy of this form should be lodged in the student’s School file (managed by Julie Forbes) and another copy should be sent to the Graduate School (managed by Cheryl Croydon). Please note that in cases where students have elected to go through the progress monitoring of institutions such as the James Hutton Institute this form must also be completed.

**Monitoring progress during year 3 / writing up**

By the end of the full-time registration (pro-rata for part-time students) students will submit to the Graduate School a Thesis Completion Form, which should include a detailed timetable for the completion of their thesis.

If the supervisors consider that the student is on track to submit within the period of supervised study or within the writing up period no further action will be taken.

If there are any concerns about the student’s ability to complete within the normal period of supervised study (36 months), a meeting will be held at which progress will be discussed and a realistic, detailed timetable for completion within the writing up period (year 4) will be agreed. A formal note of this meeting will be made.

If applicable, the same process will be followed at the month 42nd and 48th month of full-time registration. If the thesis has not been submitted by the end of the 12th month of the writing up period (48 months) a further progress review will be instigated, following the same procedure described above. Further details can be found here.
5. Postgraduate Research Students, Research Training and Personal and Professional Development (Personal Development Plans)

Being a research student is not simply about producing and processing data and writing a thesis. Doing a research degree requires the development of many skills, including personal, career and professional development skills as well as skills directly related to the topic you are studying, namely developing your knowledge about and ability to use a range of research methods and analytical techniques. Professional development also encompasses participation in the intellectual and professional life of your discipline, the University and the wider academic community.

While some skills can be learnt and honed through personal experience, others are learnt in a more structured manner. To ensure that these skills are developed, formal research, personal and professional development training is now considered to be essential for ALL postgraduate research students and post-doctoral researchers. Training courses may be taken at all stages of the PhD. Some training is specifically designed for new PGRs and some is most suitable for students in the middle of their research degree or in their final year. Research students in Human Geography follow training guidelines set out by the Economic and Social Research Council: these requirements apply to ALL research students in Human Geography, broadly defined, regardless of their source of funding or specific research topic.

Training in generic and transferable skills is provided by the College of Physical Sciences and by central University units, including the Directorate of Information Technology and the Staff Development Unit. Attendance at these and other relevant training and skills development courses comprise part of each research student’s Personal Development Plan. Further, specialist skills training may take place outwith the University.

5.1 The Researcher Development Framework

The Researcher Development Framework (RDF) is a major UK-wide approach to researcher development, which aims to enhance our capacity to build the UK workforce, develop world-class researchers and build our research base.

The RDF describes the knowledge, behaviours and attitudes of researchers and encourages them to aspire to excellence through achieving higher levels of development. It will be invaluable for planning, promoting and supporting the personal, professional and career development of researchers in higher education.

The framework is designed for:
- researchers within higher education to evaluate and plan their own personal, professional and career development
- managers/supervisors of researchers in their role supporting the development of researchers
- trainers, developers, human resources specialists and careers advisors in the planning and provision of support for researchers’ development.

It will also be of interest to employers in identifying the benefits of employing researchers, individuals interested in training as a researcher, and researchers looking to move into higher education from other sectors. Policymakers, funders of researchers and other stakeholders will find the associated Researcher Development Statement (RDS) a useful strategic overview of the RDF.
The RDF supports the implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers, the QAA Code of practice for research degree programmes\textsuperscript{5} and the ‘Roberts’ recommendations for postgraduate researchers and research staff.

The diagram below summarises the types of skills early career researchers, including PhD students, should develop.

5.2 Personal and Professional Development Courses offered by the Institution

The Skills for Research Excellence Programme

The \textit{Skills for Research Excellence Programme} has been specially designed to offer PhD students training opportunities in generic skills with the aims of helping them to complete their research project successfully and on-time, and of enhancing student’s employability once they have graduated. The Researcher Development unit acts as a portal for all the information you need about PDPs, generic skills and the courses on offer at the University of Aberdeen, is available \url{here}.

\textsuperscript{5} \url{www.qaa.ac.uk}
This programme is designed to deliver training in the skills identified in the Researcher Development Framework. A range of courses have been incorporated that cover the principal generic areas of personal effectiveness, communication skills, networking & team building, and career management which have been identified by the Research Councils as key areas in which PhD students should receive additional training.

Most of the courses are just one or two hours long although others last for a morning or afternoon, or are one- or two-day courses. All are held on campus and are FREE to all PhD students registered at the University of Aberdeen. Some have only limited places available because they are interactive workshops. Early booking is recommended.

Choosing which courses to take and registration
Details of courses available for you to take from across the University are here. Having looked at what is available, you should consider which areas you would most benefit from training in at this stage in your PhD. Some indication of the suggested appropriate year a course might be taken is given, but this is only indicative information. You should feel free to seek further advice on this from your PhD supervisors. Discussion with your peers may also help identify the courses which may be of greatest benefit.

The Directorate of Information Technology and the Centre for Academic Development
In addition to the courses described above, research students are welcome to attend any of the short courses offered by the Directorate of Information Technology, Library Services and the Centre for Academic Development. Courses provided by DIT include, for example: MS Office suite - Access, PowerPoint, Excel and Word. Courses offered by CAD include, for example: Presenting at conferences; Small group teaching; Learning styles; and The Learning and Teaching Support network (LTSN). Programmes are published for each half session on the web. If you wish to attend a training course please check with your supervisor whether you should attend before booking because participants are often charged for attending: normally this charge is met by the School.

5.3 Postgraduate Research Training in Human Geography
The training requirements of Human Geography research students follow the requirements of the Economic and Social Research Council and are much more detailed and extensive than those for other research students in the School. Geography and Environment is part of the Human Geography pathway of the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded Scottish Graduate School of Social Science Doctoral Training Centre. The generic training requirements of Human Geography research students are largely met through training courses delivered by the central institution (see above). Additional, subject specific, training is offered through the Doctoral Training Centre. The most substantial course is the Advanced Research Training in Human Geography residential training course delivered by the Human Geography pathway, a consortium of the Scottish Geography departments. At the end of the first and second year of registration Human Geography students will attend the Advanced Research Training for Human Geographers residential course. This course is organised and delivered by a consortium comprising the Scottish Universities’ Geography Departments who now comprise the Human Geography pathway of the ESRC funded Scottish Doctoral Training Centre. The course is mainly student driven and the topics covered vary from year to year to take into account the interests of the cohort of students attending each course. The course takes place each September at the Kindrogan Field Centre, Perthshire and it’s overarching objective is to provide students with an opportunity to gain advanced level expertise in conducting human geographical research.
The Scottish Graduate School of Social Science runs an annual Summer School that Human Geography research students are strongly encouraged to attend.

5.4 Advanced Research Training (Years Two and Three of a PhD)

Training and skills development is not simply an activity for the first year research student. Some skills sessions, such as preparing for your viva and research grant application overviews, are best taken in years two or three. The School of Geosciences therefore expects all full-time second and third year research students, and part-time students where possible, to attend and participate fully in courses such as those outlined above and in the following activities:

Departmental research seminars
All research students are expected to attend research seminars, from the selection available across the School, and attend research presentations given by guests as and when they arise. Research students should also attend, where appropriate, research seminars held in other departments across the University and in partner institutions such as the James Hutton Institute, the Centre for Environmental Hydrology (Banchory) and the Scottish Agricultural College (Craibstone, Aberdeen).

Delivering formal research seminars and conferences
Formal presentations are given by all year 1 students and all year 2 students as part of progress monitoring requirements. Year 1 students will undertake short 10 minute oral presentations, while year 2 students will provide an overview of their research through a poster presentation. These formal presentations will be undertaken in the context of the School of Geosciences PGR Conference held in June. For students unable to present their research at the PGR Conference (for example, because they have started late in the academic year), it is advised that presentations take place within the context of progress review interviews. All research students are encouraged to attend and deliver posters / papers at academic conferences outwith the School. If not covered by your project, limited funds may be available from the College or School (through the research clusters) to assist with conference attendance.

Teaching experience
During their second and third years in particular, research students are encouraged, where possible, to gain teaching experience as tutorial and seminar assistants in subjects with which they are familiar. Research students involved in undergraduate teaching are expected to attend formal training sessions delivered by the Centre for Academic Development (a short course designed specifically for small group teaching assistants is incorporated in the College PGR induction programme). More information is available in section 6.

If you would like to be considered for teaching activities please discuss this with your supervisors and contact Ann Simpson (Meston) or Julie Timms (St Mary’s). You must complete some necessary paperwork before you can teach – if this paperwork is not completed you are not covered by Employers Liability Insurance and are not permitted to teach or receive payment.

Language Skills
The Language Centre is responsible for providing academic guidance and support on matters relating to English as a Foreign Language and also on the teaching and learning of Modern Foreign Languages in general.

For students whose first language is not English, the Centre provides academic support in the form of one-to-one consultations and English Language workshops and short courses. These services are
widely publicised around the university during term-time and students can sign up for as many courses as they feel they need. The Centre also runs a range of pre-university English Language Foundation Programmes and a 1-month intensive pre-sessional programme in English for Academic Purposes.

For staff and students interested in learning other languages, the Centre currently offers evening classes in Chinese, Italian, French, German, Japanese, Russian and Spanish. Depending on demand, classes in other foreign languages may also be provided.

In addition to the services described above, the Language Centre provides a range of other services. Staff and registered students of the university may access these resources free of charge and receive support and friendly advice on language learning from the Centre’s team of dedicated staff.

**Contact:** The Language Centre. Tel: 01224 27 2537/ 2538, or see the [website](#).
6. Part-time teaching opportunities

All research students are encouraged to undertake some part-time teaching during the course of their research degree where possible. As well as providing an opportunity to develop generic and transferable skills, demonstrating, tutoring lecturing and assisting on field classes provide an opportunity to earn money over and above that which is paid via a studentship.

In 2006 an agreement regarding pay structures was reached between UK Higher Education Institutions and campus trade unions. The Framework Agreement introduced a 51 point pay spine which encompasses all jobs available at a University. Pay rates are agreed through a process of national pay bargaining and each spinal point corresponds to an annual salary and a pro rate hourly rate. The University of Aberdeen has divided these 51 spinal points into nine pay grades. Full details are available here.

Part-time teaching in the School of Geosciences has been classified as follows:

- **Lecturing**: (a) specialist, stand along lectures and (b) lecturing within the structure of a pre-existing course. Will normally equate to Grade 7, minimum appointment is spinal point 37.
- **Tutoring**: leading tutorial or workshop groups. Equates to Grade 5, minimum appointment is at spinal point 30.
- **Demonstrating**: assistance in, for example, laboratory classes. Equates to Grade 4, minimum appointment is at spinal point 24

Honorariums will be paid for any PGR who assists on a fieldtrip. In addition to receiving free travel, board and lodgings, an honorarium of £30 per full day in the field will be paid. If you are away from home on a field trip at a location that does not provide meals you may claim the expenses you incur for lunch or dinner according to the University guidelines for staff expenses. The School of Geosciences does not expect fieldtrip assistants to undertake any marking directly associated with the fieldtrip.

If you are invited to teach, your contribution will be formally described as lecturing, tutoring or demonstrating. You will then be assigned to the appropriate point within the pay grade for the type of teaching your will undertake. For example, if you have never demonstrated before you will be appointed to spinal point 17 on Grade 4, but if you have prior teaching experience you may be appointed to spinal point 18 on Grade 4.

Duties and remuneration associated with demonstrating

**Classroom contact remuneration**: you are paid for the length of time you are in the class (i.e. if a lab class is timetabled for 2 hours you will be paid for 2 hours classroom contact).

**Preparation time remuneration**: demonstrators work from pre-prepared material but are required to have read all materials supporting the class in advance. Unless specified otherwise you will be paid ½ an hour preparation for each hour of classroom contact (i.e. for every 2 hour session in class you will be paid 1 hour preparation). Note: if you take 2 classes on the same topic you will only be paid one block of preparation time.

**Out of class contact time**: The School of Geosciences does not expect demonstrators to be available to students for out of class contact time consultation.

**Marking**: The School of Geosciences does not expect demonstrators to mark students work.

Duties and remuneration associated with tutoring
Tutoring involves classroom contact, preparation, out of class contact with students and marking.

*Classroom contact remuneration:* you are paid for the length of time you are in the class (i.e. if a tutorial is timetabled for 2 hours you will be paid for 2 hours classroom contact).

*Preparation time remuneration:* tutors work with pre-prepared material but are required to have read all materials supporting the class in advance. You will be paid \( \frac{1}{2} \) an hour preparation for each hour of classroom contact (i.e. for every 2 hour session in class you will be paid 1 hour preparation). Note: if you take 2 classes on the same tutorial topic you will only be paid one block of preparation time.

*Out of class contact time:* some disciplines require tutors to be available to students outwith class time. In recognition of discharging this important activity you will be paid for 3 hours out of class contact per tutorial group per half session.

*Marking:* some disciplines require tutors to mark assignments and exemption exam papers. The rate of pay for marking is 4 scripts per hour (i.e. if you have a class of 12 students your will receive 3 hours pay for marking each assignment the group submits). A minimum payment of 3 hours marking per group will be paid. The normal tutorial/workgroup size is 12 students but if a group exceeds this number an additional marking payment (at the rate of 4 scripts to be marked per hour) will be made.

### Duties and remuneration associated with lecturing

*Classroom contact remuneration:* you are paid for the length of time you are in the class (i.e. if a lecture is timetabled for 2 hours you will be paid for 2 hours classroom contact).

*Preparation time remuneration:* preparation time varies according to the type of lecturing undertaken. Preparation of a specialist, stand alone lecture (e.g. a one off lecture based on your PhD topic) will be paid at the rate of 1 hour of preparation for 1 hour classroom (i.e. 2 hours preparation for giving a 2 hour lecture). Preparation of a lecture to be given as part of a course will be paid at the rate of 2 hours preparation for each hour of lecturing (i.e. 4 hours preparation will be paid for giving a 2 hour lecture).

*Out of class contact time:* if you give a number of lectures on a course you should expect some out of class contact with students. Such contact is part of the lecturing job and will not be remunerated separately.

*Marking:* in cases where the topic taught by a part-time lecturer leads directly to an assignment or an exam question the part-time lecturer may be required to mark that assignment and/or exam question. The rate of pay for marking will be 1 hour of pay for hour of classroom contact (i.e. if 6 hours of lectures are delivered 6 hours of pay for marking will be received).

If you would like to be considered for teaching activities please see Sheila McKay or Julie Timms. You must complete some paperwork before you can teach – if this paperwork is not completed you are not covered by Employers Liability Insurance and are not permitted to teach, let alone be paid.
7. Resources for Postgraduate Research Students

7.1 Facilities in St Mary’s and Meston buildings

Room allocation
Office accommodation for postgraduate research students is in shared rooms within St Mary’s and the Meston building. Students are provided with a desk, a networked computer, space in a filing cabinet and shelving space.

Keys
All research students are issued with a key to their office and to the front door of their building. The School Administrator, must be informed immediately if either of these keys are lost.

Security
Research students are advised to keep rooms locked when empty and on no account to leave purses, wallets or other valuables lying around. The main doors of most University buildings are locked at 6pm and care must be taken to ensure that they remain locked after that time. Keyholders may enter the buildings after 6pm, but note that no-one may access the Meston building after 11pm (when the doors are double locked).
In case of an emergency, at any time, ring University Security on extension 3939.

Health and Safety
The University of Aberdeen operates a no smoking policy in all buildings. All students should note the exits from their rooms, the location of fire alarms and the position of fire extinguishers in their building. If you hear the fire alarm immediately collect your coat and valuables, close the door of the room after you and proceed to the assembly point. If medical attention is required, take the casualty to the Accident and Emergency Department at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, Foresterhill.
In the Meston building access to labs is by key holders only. Only non-hazardous work may be carried out outside normal office hours.

If you are working outwith normal office hours in St Mary’s or Meston you must sign in /out of the building. In St Mary’s the sign-in book is located near the out-of-hours entrance.

Mail
Each postgraduate research student is allocated a pigeon-hole/mail box. In St Mary’s internal mail and research related external mail may be handed into the Departmental office for posting. In Meston internal and external mail is collected from outside the main Geology office. All external mail should have the appropriate departmental stamp on it, or the appropriate Royal Mail stamp should be affixed.

Stationery
Research students may request small quantities of stationery. University templates are available to use for research-related correspondence – see here.

Telephones
All postgraduate offices have telephones which receive incoming calls and allow internal calls to be made.

Photocopying
Copyright Laws must be adhered to: an up-to-date copy is posted above most photocopiers. Students in both St Mary’s and Meston have access to the networked photocopier – printer – scanner (this works on a swipe-card systems – use your student ID card). Use of the photocopier / printer is monitored (staff use is monitored too!). If your use is considered excessive you may be required to pay for some or all of your printing.
Computing facilities
Each research student should have exclusive access to a PC at their desk which is networked to the central university system. A wide range of software may be accessed via this network. All computers are linked to the University network for access to the Internet and email. Specific software requirements will be addressed in liaison with individual supervisors.

All students have access to personal space on the central H drive which can be used to back-up files. Remember to make back-ups regularly. If you required large amounts of H drive space you should discuss your requirements with the School computing officers.

The introduction of unauthorised personal software, games or other external material to departmental machines is prohibited. Unauthorised copying of programs or data from the hard disk or from program CD Roms is strictly prohibited.

Viruses spread very quickly through computer networks. They may be introduced through many formats, including, for example, CDs, flash drives or through emails and email attachments. It is important that you run a virus check regularly. All University machines have anti-virus software that is updated automatically on a regular basis. Please learn how to use this facility to ensure your computer remains virus free! You may set up your home laptop/pc so that you can use University electronic resources as a ‘local’ user (essential if you wish, for example, to access electronic journals from home). DIT has a fact sheet explaining how to set up your computer appropriately.

If an error or fault occurs when using a computer or a printer DO NOT ATTEMPT TO FIX IT YOURSELF. Inform Matthew Norrie or Judith Christie, the School’s computer officers, immediately. The DIT helpdesk should be able to offer assistance with many software/hardware queries.

7.2 Further support services for Postgraduate Research Students

Problems of an academic or personal nature are sometimes encountered by research students and there is plenty of help around. Your supervisor is an obvious starting point, and most problems associated with your time as a PhD student can easily be resolved in the School/Discipline. Your supervisors, PGR coordinator (Charlotta Hillerdal in Archaeology, Brice Rae in Geography and Environment and John Howell in Geology), Chair of the PG committee (Jeff Oliver), or the Head of School (David Jolley) may be contacted about any problems you are experiencing. In the first instance, you should try to resolve any problems with your supervisor directly. If attempts fail, you should discuss the matter with your PGR coordinator.

The University offers a fairly comprehensive system of student support which is open to research as well as undergraduate students.
Postgraduate Registry and the Academic Standards Committee (Postgraduate)
The Postgraduate Registry deals with all matters to do with your registration at the University, including the payment of fees, suspension of studies, applications to study away from Aberdeen etc. It also oversees the examination of your thesis and will coordinate any academic appeals that may be made. You can contact the registry directly.

Student Support Services
This is the umbrella organisation for various areas, including, University Counselling Service, University Chaplaincy, wardennial staff and the Student Advisory Service. Full details about student support services can be found here with information about the student support services most likely to be of relevance to research students noted below.

Advice
The student Advice and Support Office is an integrated office, located in The Hub, Elphinstone Road, whose staff includes:
- the Student Support Officer/Senior Disability Adviser
- the Disability Adviser
- the Assistant Disability Adviser
- the International Student Advisers
- the Student Support Adviser

The advice and information we offer is impartial and confidential; phone 273935 for an appointment if you need to speak to a particular member of staff.

Careers Service
There is a dedicated postgraduate research student and contract research student advisor in the Careers Service.

Child Care
Although there are no crèche facilities at the University, there is a registered Nursery for student and staff parents in the heart of Old Aberdeen for babies, toddlers and infants.

Rocking Horse Nursery: phone 273400

Appeals and Complaints Procedure
It is the policy of the University at all times to provide the highest possible level of service to its students. Nevertheless, it is recognised that there will be occasions when students may feel that the level of service, or the treatment they have received from staff, has fallen short of that normally expected, and that, in the case of an academic complaint, they have suffered a material disadvantage as a result.

Counselling
The Counselling Service offers free, confidential counselling with trained Counsellors and is open to all students and staff in the University. We also run a variety of workshops on topics such as, Stress and Relaxation, Assertiveness and Self-Confidence and Effective Helping.

Counselling Service: phone 272139, email counselling@abdn.ac.uk, or website

Information For Disabled Students
For general enquiries, the Disability Advisers at the University of Aberdeen can be contacted at:

Student Advice and Support Office
University of Aberdeen
The Hub
Elphinstone Road
Old Aberdeen AB24 3TU
Tel: 01224 273935
Financial Assistance
The University has limited funds to assist students who encounter “unexpected and/or exceptional financial difficulties”. Application forms are available from the Student Advice and Support Office, the Students’ Association and the Medical School. Awards are usually quite small and the funds cannot meet the costs of tuition fees or maintenance. The Money Advice Centre is an independent charitable service located in The Hub, Elphinstone Road, to provide all manner of advice and guidance on your personal finances.

Fitness
The University promotes the fitness of staff and students through sport and recreation. A comprehensive range of fitness instruction, life-style assessment and other services are available. Start your enquires here.

Ultimate Questions
The University Chaplain is available to the whole community for people of all faiths and none. The Chaplaincy Centre will also provide you with details of denominational chaplains, chaplains for other faiths, and meeting and prayer facilities.

The University of Aberdeen Student’s Association (SA)
There is a postgraduate representative on the committee of the Student’s Association and research students may become members of any club or society affiliated to the Student’s Association.

7.3 Facilities for students with a disability
Within the University at large, provision has been made for students with disabilities. These include: priority access to computers in the Library; sound cards for speech synthesis; CD-ROM and library guide; TV with Teletext and an individual player; electronic reading machine and open book scanning; text enlargement software; permanent ramps; accessible toilets; designated car parking spaces; induction loops in lecture theatres.

Most of the specialised computing facilities are located in the University’s main library, the Queen Mother Library, which is committed to providing adequate access to resource material for all students. The Queen Mother Library has a dedicated Disability Officer. The University’s Support Services includes a designated Disability Advisor and there is a website with information advice and contacts for students with disabilities here.

The historical site of the Old Aberdeen campus and the layout of some buildings means that access for students with mobility difficulties requires some careful planning in advance. Whilst improvements have been made, and are ongoing in other buildings, students with mobility difficulties are always encouraged to visit the campus before accepting a place to study, where at all possible, to establish their own opinions.

If your personal circumstances change during your period of registration you are encouraged to meet with the Student Support Officer / Disabilities Advisor to discuss your requirements.
8. Safety in the Field

Field safety is of paramount importance for all researchers in the School of Geosciences. Research Students should ensure that they have read and understood relevant publications about health and safety / field safety and if they have any queries relating to these matters they should discuss them with their supervisor or with Jan Walker.

8.1 Health and Safety guidance

ALL research students should ensure that they have read the School of Geosciences Health and Safety Handbook (available here).

For research students undertaking fieldwork see the School of Geosciences Fieldwork Handbook here.

Geosciences Health and Safety documents include Mountain Safety - Basic Precautions, Guidance Notes on Fieldwork Safety and Safety on Unsupervised Field Projects.

STUDENTS MUST ADHERE TO THE GUIDANCE AND INSTRUCTIONS CONTAINED IN THESE PUBLICATIONS.

8.2 Conducting Research Away from Aberdeen

Many research students in the School of Geosciences conduct their research away from the Institution. This ranges from day visits to more prolonged periods of activity in the field. Over and above to policies and procedures referred to above, students conducting fieldwork away from Aberdeen for longer than a week or so are expected to keep in regular contact with their supervisors, by phone or email wherever possible. All students in the field have access to the School during normal office hours and have 24 hour access to the University’s emergency contact line.

Prior to departing for fieldwork, students must prepare a risk assessment report. Students must also ensure that they have read and understood the various health and safety publications recommended to them.

The University regularly offers first aid courses. It is advised that you complete one of these courses if your research will involve you being out in the field.

8.3 Students leaving the UK to conduct fieldwork

Students conducting research overseas must inform the Postgraduate Registry of the dates they will be outwith the UK. The Registry may need to recalculate academic fees.

8.4 Tier 4

The UK Government’s Home Office Tier 4 regulations apply to all international students. The University is required to regularly monitoring international students. International students studying in the School of Geosciences are informed on an individual basis of the reporting and monitoring system that applies to them. Please note that all immigration/ visa matters can only be discussed with the international students officer and all fees issues must be directed to the Postgraduate Registry – members of School staff may not discuss these topics with any student.
9. Research Ethics

The University of Aberdeen’s Advisory Group on Research Ethics and Governance (AGREG) has developed a Research Governance Handbook which provides information and direction to research staff and students on key issues in the area of research ethics, including ethical review, unacceptable research conduct and training in research ethics and governance.

All research students, regardless of their research topic, are obliged to conduct their research in an ethically appropriate manner.

All postgraduate research involving human participants is subject to internal (University) ethical review.

Information on Research Ethics and Governance, including the University's Research Ethics Framework, is available here.

10. Expenses procedure

The University has a Policy on Expenses and Benefits see here, that all research students must adhere to. If you do not comply with the policy you may not be reimbursed for expenses incurred. Please ensure that you have read the travel expenses section.

If you have any queries regarding how to proceed with making and paying for travel arrangements and claiming expenses incurred in research activities please discuss the matter with your supervisors and Ann Simpson or Julie Timms BEFORE booking travel etc.

11. Academic Quality Handbook

Post graduate students are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the Academic Quality Handbook, available here. In particular Section 8: Research Students, which outlines the Code of Practice for PGR students and the University.
APPENDIX 1: A List of Relevant Codes and Guidance

Appeals and Complaints

Code of Practice on Conflicts of Interest
http://www.abdn.ac.uk/admin/conflict_interest.shtml

Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic Quality Handbook Appendix 5:15)
http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendices.shtml

Code of Practice for Postgraduate Taught Students, Programme Coordinators, Heads of School, Heads of Graduate School and College PG Officers (Academic Quality Handbook Appendix 5:3)
http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendices.shtml

http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendices.shtml

Conflict of Interest - Staff and Students
http://www.abdn.ac.uk/admin/conflict_interest.shtml

Data Protection Policy
http://www.abdn.ac.uk/about/our-website/data-protection.php

Disciplinary Procedures
- Non-Academic Staff:  http://www.abdn.ac.uk/staffnet/teaching/aqh/appendix5x15b.pdf

Ethnics – University of Aberdeen Research Ethics Framework

Ethics and Governance – College of Sciences
http://www.abdn.ac.uk/cops/research/ethics-and-governance-141.php

Good Research Practice
http://www.abdn.ac.uk/develop/researchers/good-practice-153.php

Guidelines on Keeping Research Records

Monitoring and Progression Forms:
http://www.abdn.ac.uk/cops/graduate/monitoring-progression-240.php

Plagiarism – Procedures for dealing with allegations of (Academic Quality Handbook Appendix 5:16)
http://www.abdn.ac.uk/registry/quality/appendices.shtml#section1

Registration – Changes to Studies
http://www.abdn.ac.uk/infohub/study/changes-to-studies.php
Statement on the Handling of Allegation of Research Misconduct