GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH UNSATISFACTORY STUDENT PROGRESS: POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS

Code of Practice for Postgraduate Research Students

The Code of Practice for postgraduate research students stipulates that Heads of School or their representative, amongst other things:

- Apply the Postgraduate Structured Management Frameworks to meet the needs of their School and ensure that research students and their supervisors are issued with the relevant framework;
- Facilitate students’ obtaining research training, language tuition and necessary skills;
- Monitor students’ progress through the bi-annual Research Student Assessment Forms and by asking supervisors for extra reports as required;
- Recommend changes of degree registration and/or subject;
- Recommend that a candidate’s registration be terminated.

Using the Postgraduate Structured Management Framework, the formal bi-annual Research Student Assessment Forms, together with any additional School standard practices (e.g. interim 3-monthly reports, School Research Committee), Schools will be able to monitor a research student’s progress.

General Regulation 24 for Research Degrees states that “The Senatus Academicus shall have the power to terminate at any time a person’s candidature provided it is satisfied that there is sufficient reason for doing so.”

Initial Warning

When a School has decided that a postgraduate student’s performance is giving rise to anxiety and has reached the stage beyond which an informal word of encouragement will suffice, the student should be warned formally that his/her performance and/or attendance is such that, if not improved, he/she may be asked to discontinue study. This should be done by the Head of School, where appropriate, School Research Committee or Postgraduate Progress Committee and will normally take the form of an interview. The warning should immediately be followed in writing to the student with dates set when particular targets must be achieved. It might also stipulate required attendance on specific training courses. The letter should also include details of support the School might provide e.g. stipulate regular meetings with the supervisor(s). Ideally dates by which targets should be achieved should be agreed in writing in conjunction with the student and supervisor(s).

A copy of the letter should be sent to the Postgraduate Registry. The Postgraduate Registry will not at this stage take any action other than to place the warning letter in the student’s personal file.

Formal Consideration

Should the student’s performance not improve the Head of School should write to notify the relevant College (through the Postgraduate Registry), recommending that the student’s studies be terminated. Full details should be provided of the supervision and training provided to date, including reports of any meetings with the student to discuss progress, and details of the monitoring procedures applied by the School.

If, on behalf of the Senate, the relevant College upholds the School’s recommendation to terminate study the student will be informed in writing by the Registry and advised of the right of appeal.