



Postgraduate Research Code of Practice

APPENDIX 11

Policy on Off-site and Split-site Research Degree Study (for a single University of Liverpool award)

1. Introduction

1.1 This Policy forms part of the University's Postgraduate Research (PGR) Code of Practice. In addition to the PGR Code of Practice and its Appendices, other University of Liverpool (UoL) policies, procedures and documents which may be relevant to this Policy are as follows:

- Ordinances governing Postgraduate Research degrees listed in subsection 1.2 below
- Student Complaints Procedure
- Dignity at Work and Study Policy and Procedures
- PGR Handbook
- Individual agreements governing the joint supervision of research study

1.2 This Policy covers the following research programmes:

- Doctor in Philosophy (PhD)
- Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
- Doctor of Medicine (MD)
- Campus-based Professional Doctorates (the research element)

Online Professional Doctorate programmes are governed by the [Online Professional Doctorate Framework \(Appendix 12 of the PGR Code of Practice\)](#).

Joint or dual awards are governed by the individual award agreements.

Advice should be sought from AQSD if the student will be based at a site where an established agreement is already in place or if the student is part of a Research Council cohort or a similar Doctoral Training Programme.

1.3 The value of a UoL research degree award is underpinned by the quality of the research experience provided to students studying on the respective degree programme. UoL is responsible for the academic quality and standards of all study within its research degree programmes, including those offered under a collaborative agreement with an institutional partner.

2. General Principles

2.1 This Policy covers arrangements for research students who are registered solely as students of UoL but who are located away from the UoL campus for substantial period(s) of their registration.

2.2 Students registered for a single UoL research award with an off-site or split-site pattern of study are subject to the Ordinances governing the relevant research degrees in place at the time of their registration.

2.3 All requests for a research student to spend the duration/a substantial period of their registration away from the UoL campus require approval, initially at School/Institute level and then by the Faculty PGR Director. See Section 4 below.

2.4 Students studying off-site or under split-site arrangements should enjoy a comparable experience to on-campus students, receive adequate and appropriate induction, supervision and pastoral care and have access to appropriate facilities. Any specific resource requirements must be covered in the individual agreements.

3. Definitions

3.1 The following definitions apply when a research degree student registered solely for a UoL award is located away from the UoL campus for all or part of their studies:

- a) **'Off-site'**: where a research student is located off-campus at a collaborating institution or organisation which provides some element of formal supervision for the full duration of study, except for short study visits (typically less than one month) to the UoL campus. Arrangements for students undertaking research degrees at XJTLU and LSTM are governed by their specific institutional agreements with UoL.
- b) **'Split-site'**: where, under a joint supervision agreement with a collaborating institution/organisation, a research student spends substantial period(s) of study (more than one month) at the remote institution(s). Under such arrangements, the student would normally spend a minimum of twelve months at the UoL campus.

For the purposes of calculating the total period of study spent off-campus, all short periods of study must be added together, e.g. two separate periods of study at the split site of six months duration will be calculated as a total period of twelve months.

- c) **'Independent off-site or split-site'**: where the nature of a student's research project requires their whole or partial attendance in a location that is substantially distant from the UoL campus, with no access to supervision by another institution/organisation (for example when conducting field studies in remote locations). In these circumstances a joint supervision agreement is not required, but the University must satisfy itself that the student will be provided with appropriate training, development and physical resources as well as pastoral care, i.e. that an appropriate risk assessment has been carried out and that there will be a continuity of adequate and appropriate supervision by the UoL Supervisors.

3.2 Short study visits away from the UoL campus, i.e. normally less than one month, do not require any specific academic approval.

4. Approval

In determining a pattern of study for international students, full account must be taken of the [UK Visa Immigration \(UKVI\) requirements](#) in relation to visa sponsorship; see:

4.1 Off-site arrangements

- a) For off-site study, full approval must be obtained, including:
 - i. the joint supervision agreement (template and guidance available from the [AQSD website](#)), which must be signed before a formal offer letter is sent to the prospective student, unless it is a change of pattern of study (see section 4.4 below);
 - ii. written confirmation from the hosting supervisor of their agreement to undertake the role;
 - iii. completion of the off-site approval form (available from the Research Degree Administration Team (SAS) website) and
 - iv. completion of the risk assessment form (available via the [Code of Practice on Safety and Support for Off Campus Activities](#)).

- b) Once a joint supervision agreement and supporting documentation have been approved, copies should be sent by the Research Degree Administration Team (SAS) to the School/ Institute Director of PGR, the School/ Institute PGR Administrator and the outcome reported to the PGR Committee.

4.2 *Split-site arrangements*

- a) For split-site study, full approval must be obtained, including:
- i. the joint supervision agreement (template and guidance available from the [AQSD website](#)), which must be signed before a formal offer letter is sent to the prospective student, unless it is a change of pattern of study (see section 4.4 below);
 - ii. written confirmation from the hosting supervisor of their agreement to undertake the role;
 - iii. completion of the off-site approval form (available from the Research Degree Administration Team (SAS) website) and
 - iv. completion of the risk assessment form (available via the [Code of Practice on Safety and Support for Off Campus Activities](#)).
- b) Once a joint supervision agreement and supporting documentation have been signed, copies should be sent by the Research Degree Administration Team (SAS) to the School/ Institute Director of PGR, the School/ Institute PGR Administrator and the outcome reported to the PGR Committee.

4.3 *Independent off-site or split-site arrangements*

All arrangements for independent off-site and split-site research study will be subject to the provisions of section 2.3 of this Policy, i.e. they shall require approval initially at School/Institute level and then by the Faculty PGR Director. Off-site activities must not commence until the School/ Institute Director of PGR has approved the completed risk assessment form (available via the [Code of Practice on Safety and Support for Off Campus Activities](#)).

4.4 *Changes to pattern of study*

In circumstances where a student, who has already commenced their studies at UoL, then wishes to study at another institution/organisation or independently for a substantial period of their research degree, this will require approval by UoL as a [change to the pattern of study](#) on the appropriate University form.

Where the study is at another institution/organisation where supervision is to be provided, a joint supervision agreement will be required, if one is not already in place.

4.5 *Approval of off-site or split-site Supervisors*

The off-site or split-site Supervisor must be granted 'Recognised Supervisor' status, in accordance with the PGR Policy on Research Supervision (Appendix 2 of the PGR Code of Practice) and be registered for appropriate use of UoL's PGR student systems. It is the responsibility of the UoL Dean of School/Institute to ensure this approval is obtained

5. **Duties and Responsibilities of Primary Supervisors**

In addition to those outlined in the PGR Policy on Research Supervision (Appendix 2 of the PGR Code of Practice), the Primary Supervisor of a research student undertaking off-site, split-site or independent off-site or split-site study has the following responsibilities:

- 5.1 To ensure that appropriate monitoring of the student's progress is maintained, whilst off-site.
- 5.2 In the event that the off-site Supervisor is no longer able to supervise the student while they are located at the off-site host institution/organisation, the Primary Supervisor must work with the institution/organisation to identify an appropriately qualified replacement Supervisor.
- 5.3 Where the Primary Supervisor also takes the role of Off Campus Activity Coordinator, their specific responsibilities are outlined in the [Code of Practice on Safety and Support for Off Campus Activities](#).

6. Responsibilities of the Off-site Institution/Organisation and Supervisor

The responsibilities of the off-site host institution/organisation and Supervisor must be outlined in detail in the individual student's joint supervision agreement or the institutional off-site or split-site agreements, as outlined in the [Code of Practice on Safety and Support for Off Campus Activities](#).

7. Responsibilities of the student

In addition to the responsibilities outlined elsewhere in UoL's PGR Code of Practice, Policies and the PGR Student Handbook, students should observe all the appropriate rules, regulations and local legislation at the off-site host institution/organisation.

8. Sources of further information

- [The PGR Code of Practice](#)
- [Safety and Support for off campus activities](#)
- [International Advice and Guidance](#)
- [Student Complaints Procedure](#)
- [Guild of Students Advice Service](#)
- [UK Visas and Immigration](#)
- [PGR Handbook](#)
- [Diversity and Equality policies](#)