

Guidance for Periodic Research Degrees Review

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This supplement provides guidance to the Doctoral and Academic Schools on preparing for Periodic Research Degrees Review.
- 1.2 It includes guidance on the following:
 - a. the Research Degrees Reflective Analysis Document;
 - b. electronic repository requirements;
 - c. timetable for the review event.

Explanatory note

- Guidance for panel members can be found in Quality Handbook Supplement (QHS) 7E.

2. Research Degrees Reflective Analysis Document

- 2.1 The Research Degrees Reflective Analysis Document (RDRAD) is central to the review process and is the only item of documentation prepared specifically for the review.
- 2.2 It is important that the RDRAD is a genuinely evaluative document that provides critical analysis of:
 - a. the effectiveness of processes for the management of quality and standards;
 - b. the ways in which research degree students' learning opportunities are assured and enhanced.
- 2.3 The RDRAD should provide a brief overview of research degree structures, strengths and strategic aims.
- 2.4 The key role of the document is to demonstrate to the panel how the Doctoral and Academic Schools know that the expectations in the review framework are being met across the provision as a whole. It provides a critical reflection of practice which demonstrates, through carefully chosen and referenced evidence, the commitment, strategy and approach to addressing identified issues.

- 2.5 Given that the review panel will be guided to form their judgements on the basis of the extent to which the range of expectations are being met, the structure of the RDRAD should ensure that the panel can easily identify evidence and evaluation which maps on to these expectations, and the related factors (see Quality Handbook (QH) Section 7B).
- 2.6 It is important to note that the RDRAD cannot discuss *all* aspects of research degree processes and practice in detail, nor can it anticipate the extent of the questions that review panel members will have. Information provided in the electronic repository will allow the panel to assess the effectiveness of a range of practice, and this will be supported by discussions with colleagues and students at the review event itself.
- 2.7 A final role of the RDRAD is to provide information about good practice. When considering the evidence being used to support claims being made, examples of what the Doctoral and Academic Schools consider to be particularly good, or innovative practice should be included.
- 2.8 The following structure for the RDRAD is proposed:

Section	Contents
A	Overview of research degrees including structures, strengths and strategic aims
B	<i>Review aspect 1: Standards and quality management</i> Evaluation and evidence about the management of research degree quality management and enhancement procedures and processes mapped to the associated expectations
C	<i>Review aspect 2: The quality and enhancement of the student learning opportunities</i> Evaluation of success in providing high quality, valid, relevant and inclusive learning opportunities which enable students to achieve the University's research degree awards, mapped to the associated expectations
D	Developments and initiatives Report on significant initiatives which have taken place during the years between reviews that have led to, or have the potential to lead to practice or process enhancements
E	Appendices, to include: <i>Appendix 1: Student numbers and modes of study, on both PhD and Professional Doctorates, including those at collaborative partners</i> <i>Appendix 2: Committee and management structure, indicating frequency of meetings, membership and relationship between committees</i>

Appendix 3: Presentation and analysis of student data. This will include intake data, progression and achievement data, and data on withdrawals for the last three years. It will also include data and analysis related to the PRES and to evaluation of the researcher development programme (Doctorate Plus).

3. Electronic repository requirements

- 3.1 The electronic repository forms part of the evidence available to the review panel and is used to support the critical analysis provided in the RDRAD. A navigation document must be provided to support panel members in accessing the information provided in the repository.
- 3.2 The navigation document and repository is submitted 10 weeks before the review event (see paragraph 4.1 below). This may be provided on a USB flash-drive, or via SharePoint. The method of submission is subject to agreement with the review manager.
- 3.3 Evidence within the repository must be labelled with a name of no more than 6 alphabetic or numeric characters. A list of evidence reference labels and full descriptions should be provided in the navigation document.
- 3.4 The evidence provided should represent *current* plans and strategies. For reports and committee papers, these should include documents relating to the *last full three years*, unless otherwise specified.
- 3.5 The following is an indicative list of what might be included in the electronic repository. The specific folders and documents can be tailored accordingly.

Folder	Sub-folders/documents
A: Research Degrees Reflective Analysis Document	A1: Research Degrees Reflective Analysis Document A2: Appendices
B: Plans, reports and registers	B1: Academic plans (where available) B2: URDC annual reports B3: URDC Rolling action plan B4: CRDC annual reports and rolling action plans B5: ProfD CSQRs and rolling action plans B6: Analysis/plans to address PRES outcomes B7: Research degrees collaborative register B8: Any other relevant reports/plans
C: Committees	C1: URC minutes

- C2: URDC minutes
- C3: CRDC minutes
- C4: ProfD course committee minutes
- C5: ProfD progression board minutes
- C6: Student forum minutes
- C7: Any other relevant committee/working groups

D: Strategies, policies and guidance

- D1: Research degrees strategy
- D2: Research environment statement
- D3: Project approval and transfer
- D4: Student annual monitoring
- D5: Thesis submission and assessment
- D6: ProfD Assessment and feedback
- D7: Student induction
- D8: Student evaluation
- D9: Employability
- D10: Career education and guidance
- D11: Research training and professional development
- D12: Additional strategies and guidance

E: Staff development

- E1: Supervisor development policy and records of supervisor development, including initial and ongoing development
- E2: Records of supervisor completions
- E3: Staff development event information, including Doctoral School staff, PGR tutors and ProfD course leaders
- E4: Staff research information
- E5: Staff induction policy
- E6: Record of staff acting as doctoral external examiners at other institutions
- E7: PhD students teaching on courses policy and development records
- E8: Any other staff development activity

F: Collaborative activity

- F1: Collaborative strategy
- F2: Withdrawal and teach-out documentation
- F3: Staff development for collaborative partner staff
- F4: Collaborative Operational Documents
- F5: University verifier reports

G: Student information

Folders for a sample of current and completed PhD and ProfD students (full time, part time, international, home/EU, distance learning, collaborative) across a range of Schools:

- G1: Admission records, including interview record forms
- G2: Offer letter and induction
- G3: Project approval records
- G4: Transfer records
- G5: Records of formal student monitoring
- G6: Evidence of research development training through the NTU Doctorate Plus Programme
- G7: Supervisors, change of supervisor and record of supervision
- G8: Records of transfer from full to part time, or vice versa
- G9: Suspension of study records
- G10: Probation records
- G11: Thesis submission records
- G12: Exam arrangement records
- G13: Candidates declaration records
- G14: Preliminary reports
- G15: Examiners recommendations reports
- G16: External examiner appointment records
- G17: Student handbooks

H: ProfD course information

Folder for each course to include:

- H1: Course specification (current)
 - H2: Course structure diagram
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	H3: Module specifications
	H4: Course change forms (where applicable)
	H5: External examiner reports and course responses
	H6: Current course and module handbooks
	H7: Example marking grids/matrices
	H8: Moderation arrangements
	H9: Module evaluation
I: Additional documents	Any additional documents that might be useful to the panel
J: Work in progress	Any work in progress that you wish to draw attention to

4. Timeline and process

4.1 The following provides an indication of the timeline for the preparation and conduct of the Periodic Research Degrees Review.

Timeline	Activity
12 months prior	Initial contact from the Centre for Academic Development and Quality (CADQ) regarding process and dates
6 months prior	Scoping meeting: CADQ, Head of Doctoral School, Doctoral School Professional Support Team Leader, CRDC Chairs, Pro Vice-Chancellor Research
4 months prior	Progress meeting: CADQ, Head of Doctoral School, Doctoral School Professional Support Team Leader
10 weeks prior	Submission of RDRAD and electronic repository
Periodic Research Degrees Review Event	
4 weeks after publication of the report	Follow-up meeting: Review Chair, CADQ, Pro Vice-Chancellor Research, Head of Doctoral School, Doctoral School Professional Support Team Leader

5. Timetable for review event

5.1 The following table is an indicative timetable for the review event:

Day One		Day Two	
09.00 – 10.00	Private meeting of the review panel: Welcome and housekeeping Set the agendas for the meetings with students	8.45 – 9.00	Arrival and refreshments
10.00 – 10.30	Presentation by the Doctoral School (background and context)	9.00 – 10.30	Private meeting of the review panel: Set the agenda for the aspect two meeting
10.30 – 12.00	Meeting with students	10.30 – 12.30	Meeting with representatives regarding review aspect two: the quality and enhancement of the student learning opportunities
12.00 – 1.30	Private meeting of the review panel: Working lunch Consolidate outcomes of student meetings Set the agenda for the aspect one meeting	12.30 – 1.30	Private meeting of the review panel over lunch: Consolidate outcomes of aspect two meeting Set agenda for meeting with named key stakeholders Establish whether any further evidence is required in relation to aspect two
1.30 – 3.30	Meeting with representatives regarding review aspect one: standards and quality management	1.30 – 2.15	Meeting with named key stakeholders
3.30 – 4.30	Private meeting of the review panel: Consolidate outcomes of aspect one meeting Set agenda for meeting with stakeholders	2.15 – 4.45	Private meeting of the review panel: Agree the outcomes and judgements Prepare feedback presentation
4.30 – 5.15	Tour of facilities for research degree students (may not include all panel members)	4.45	Presentation of the judgements
5.30 – 6.30	Meeting with key stakeholders		
6.30 – 7.00	Private meeting of the review panel: Consolidate outcomes of stakeholder meetings Review whether any further evidence is required in relation to aspect one Review meetings for day two		
7.00/7.15	Dinner at local restaurant for review panel		

Policy owner
CADQ

Change history			
<i>Version:</i>	<i>Approval date:</i>	<i>Implementation date:</i>	<i>Nature of significant revisions:</i>
Sept 2017	01.09.17	01.09.17	New

Equality Impact Assessment		
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Sept 2017	NA	