

Policy on Higher Education Provision with Others

Annex 7: Policy for Distance Learning PGR Awards with a Partner

1. Introduction

The policy for research degrees by distance learning is included as an annex to the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes*, which sets out the University's requirements in relation to all research degrees by distance learning. Please see: <http://www.bristol.ac.uk/academic-quality/pg/pgrcode/contents/>. It is important to note that not all distance learning research degrees will rely on a partnership – a student may be able to connect to the University's resources remotely or make use of publicly available information or resources on which to base their research and be supervised remotely. Where a student is dependent on facilities, resources or data from another organisation (including their usual place of work) the *Policy for Higher Education Provision with Others* will become relevant, and a formal agreement must be put in place. The additional consideration over and above the annex in the *Regulations and Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes* that must be taken into account for distance learning research degree programmes are presented below.

2. Contract Types and Approval

It is recommended that Schools or Faculties contact AQPO early on in the process when deciding to accept an applicant to a research degree by distance learning. This is so that timely support for approval and for the development of the contract agreement can be put in place.

For individual students taking a research degree by distance learning, there is a form for schools to complete which outlines the additional considerations for distance learning. This form is available from the Faculty PGR Admissions Teams and is used to record the additional approval process required for distance learning. This form is normally accepted in lieu of other forms that are used by AQPO when a partnership is proposed, to prevent duplication of effort. However, additional queries may be made by AQPO depending on the nature and location of the partner organisation.

A formal relationship between the University and a partner organisation that involves a number of students undertaking a distance learning PGR Programme on cohort basis is also possible. This type of arrangement will require an institutional level Framework Agreement to be put in place with the partner organisation, normally to cover a 5-year period. Each individual student will require an Individual Doctoral Agreement (IDA) to be put in place. A template IDA that can be signed off by Faculty will be included for use within the main Framework Agreement.

Both of these arrangements will require strategic approval [Alignment with UoB strategy, reputation, ethical and moral considerations, rationale for partnership,

proposed partnership activities, operational and financial considerations] and quality assurance approval [Quality of provision at HEI, alignment with regulations, student support arrangements, other due diligence checks]. Strategic approval will normally come from the University Research Committee (URC) for institutional agreements, while the Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (PGR) will normally provide strategic approval for single student agreements.

In all cases, arrangements must be designed to ensure an experience comparable to that of a student based entirely in Bristol. To ensure this, the agreement development will be completed in consultation with Schools and Faculties, relevant Professional Services teams (including but not limited to the Academic Quality and Policy Office, Finance Services and the Visa Compliance Team), and the Academic and Quality Standards Committee.