

## 5 RESEARCH STUDENTS

### 5.1 Project identification and recruitment

Appropriate, adequate and up-to-date information is available to help students make informed choices when considering options which relate to their research degree, project topic, supervisors and financial plans. Procedures are in place to establish and publish this information.

The information emphasises fundamentally important options and aspects of each research route and programme in terms of:

- what areas of research are offered (including links to specific academic teams, units)
- what research students can expect from the programme, emphasising the demanding learning objectives and specific programme requirements
- general student responsibilities, for example, on programme costs, likely time commitment, obligations around group ownership/co-authorship of a project
- intellectual property and related areas.

Information on the unique nature of research degrees, for example, how student-supervisor-project combinations may be formed or developed and other relevant institutional requirements. This includes information on institutional supports such as availability around English language teaching supports.

### 5.2 Registration

Beyond procedures covering general student registration (as set out in the Core Statutory QA Guidelines), procedures are in place for registration on research degree programmes. Procedures include clear admission criteria for each relevant research programme. All procedures are compatible with the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

Expertise is in place to assess qualifications presented by domestic and international students as evidence of meeting admission criteria. Decisions to admit to the research degree register take into account availability of expert supervision and all other necessary resources.

Procedures for registration as full-time or part-time students reflect engagement with study, and the provider does not place demands on students which interfere significantly with their ability to pursue their research projects in a timely manner.

### 5.3 Progression and transfer

There are procedures and criteria related to student progression and transfer. These include:

- procedures for systematic formal assessment of progress which involve supervisory teams; ensure objectivity and/or competence through the involvement of independent experts; and allow for extra assessment if requested by supervisors or students

- procedures setting out that final decisions related to student progression are made by appropriate bodies in the provider in accord with the regulations of the provider
- protocols for student transfer from another provider where research has already commenced
- formal processes to manage the progression of students to a higher research degree register, which involve independent expert review and defined criteria
- procedures to deal with matters that impact on the duration of student projects, including:
  - arrangements for maternity, paternity and adoptive and parental leave
  - students transferring from part-time to full-time study or vice versa
  - arrangements for suspension of study
- procedures for transfer between and exit from research degree programmes
- adequate opportunities for all relevant students to become aware of these procedures
- procedures to record all such decisions and retain relevant documents

Procedures are in place to allow decisions on progression and transfer to be reviewed or appealed. This procedure involves appropriate objective expertise and allows for decisions to change arrangements with respect to supervision.

#### **5.4 Responsibilities of research students**

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Procedures are in place to make research students aware of their responsibilities, for example with respect to commitment, integrity, ethics, attendance, engagement with supervisors and developmental opportunities, reporting on the progress of their research projects and the requirements for attaining the overall standards necessary to graduate.

#### **5.5 Student opportunity to raise issues**

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Procedures are in place to facilitate research students raising issues related to their research programme or related services, and to make complaints, including matters such as allegations of academic dishonesty, discrimination and harassment.

Supports are in place to allow research students to avail of confidential, independent and objective advice in respect of these procedures. Such supports involve trained and suitably experienced individuals and anticipate a range of possibilities for access to such supports.

Procedures are in place to capture relevant information related to formal student complaints. Complaints are logged and reported for quality improvement purposes and trends are addressed. Such procedures preserve student anonymity and confidentiality.

Procedures are in place to implement follow-up actions required where complaints are upheld. Such procedures include matters regarding the certification<sup>1</sup> of qualifications and clarify the procedures and criteria for the withdrawal of an award and the standing of the award documentation and other matters relating to research outputs.

*1 QA Guidelines for Certification are set out in the Sector Specific QA Guidelines for Designated Awarding Bodies (section 6.1) and Sector Specific QA Guidelines for Institutes of Technology (section 6.1).*