

# Research Operations Handbook

Effective from 1 January 2014

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# Research Operations Handbook

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## Glossary of Terms

Throughout, the following abbreviations have been used:

**HESA** = Higher Education Statistical Agency

**QAA** = Quality Assurance Agency

**RI** = Research Institute

**RC** = Research Centre

**FRC** = Faculty Research Committee

**DOS** = Director of Studies

**URC** = University Research Committee

**APR** = Annual Progress Review

**PGRT** = Post-graduate Research Tutor

**RASC** = Research Awards Sub-committee (a sub-committee of URC)

**STaR Office** = Student Transnational and Research Office (part of Registry)

## Research Forms

**IMPORTANT:** For document control purposes and to ensure that the form that you complete is the most up-to-date, please only download forms as and when required from the STaR Office website

<https://www.wlv.ac.uk/study-here/student-support/star-office/research-forms/>

## Introduction

The introduction of the new Research Regulations has given the University an ideal opportunity to review the documents that supports research administration and guidance around the University.

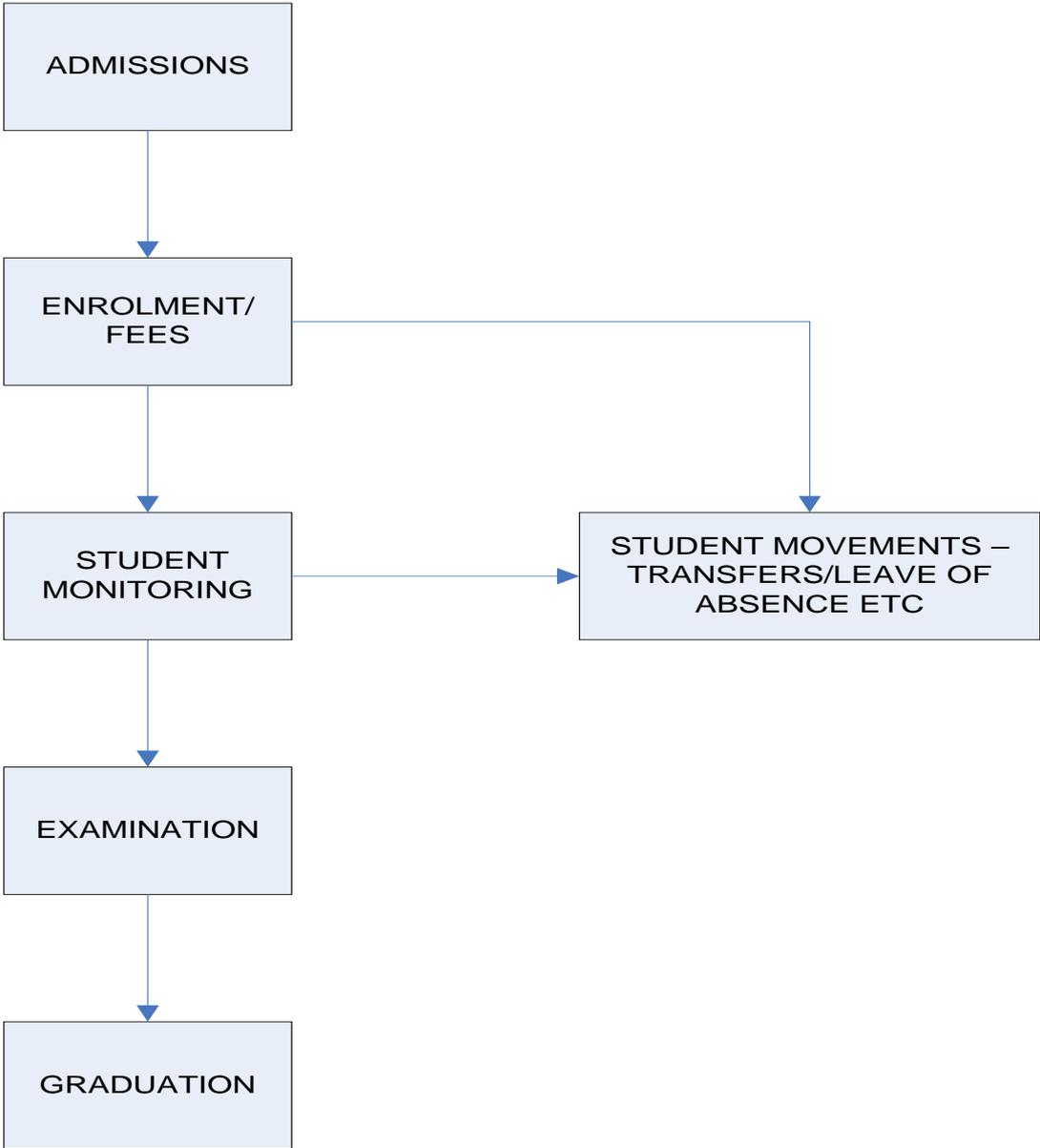
This Operations Handbook attempts to articulate some of the key processes in a student's life-cycle and relates to the other supporting documents, namely:-

- Student Handbook
- Examiner's Handbook
- Supervisor's Handbook
- Research Regulations
- Professional Doctorate Regulations

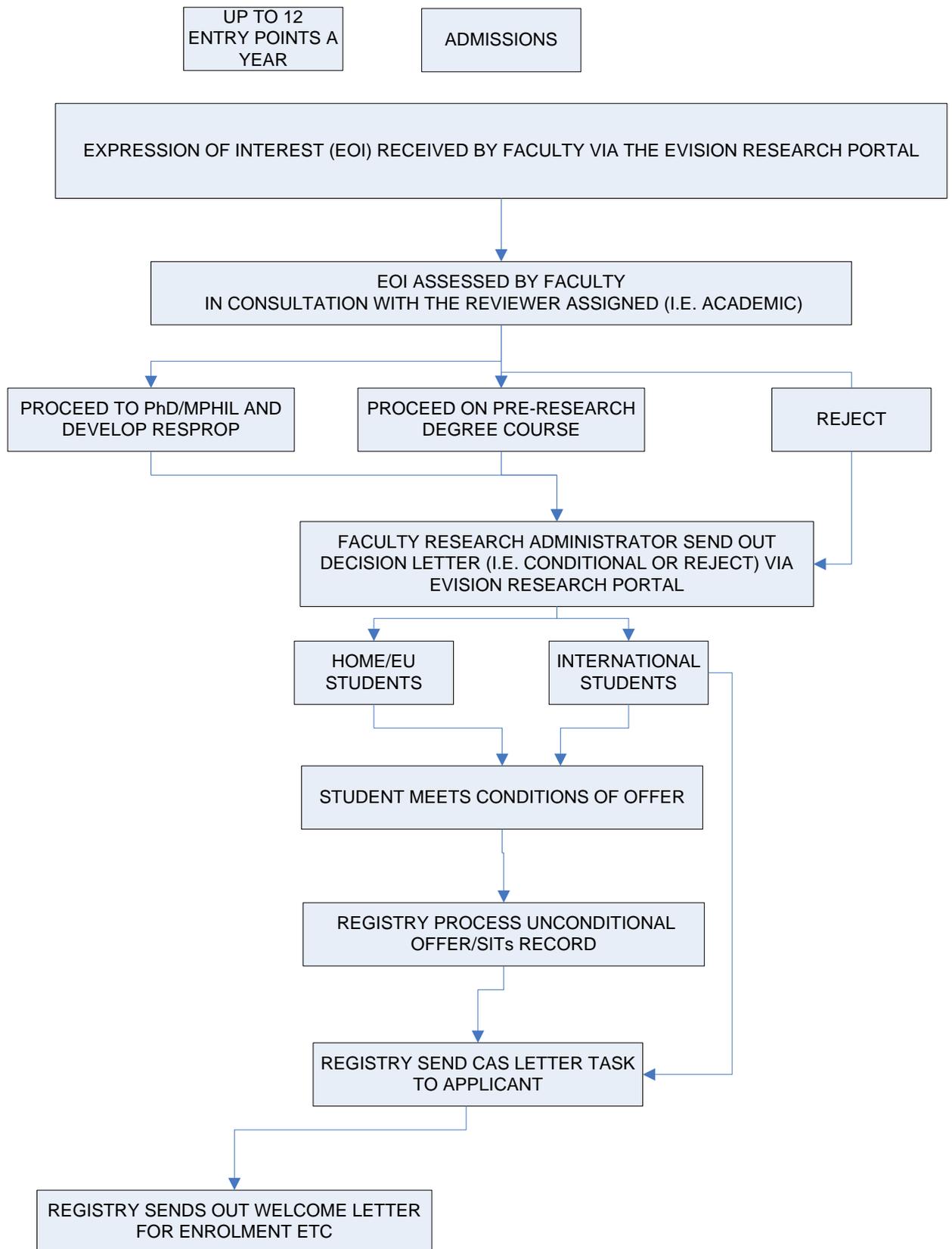
There are a number of developments within the University, both Systems-driven and Faculty-driven which inevitably means that this document is constantly evolving so care needs to be taken to ensure that the reader is reviewing the latest version.

**This handbook is printed for your convenience but may be updated periodically. To view the most up to date version please see the University's [Academic Regulations webpage](#).**

STUDENT LIFE-CYCLE



## Section 1: Admissions



# Admission Requirements for Postgraduate Research Programmes

## Entry

Before a candidate commences his/her studies and research at the University, all candidates for a research degree shall be required to satisfy the requirements for entry.

A potential applicant for a research degree shall normally hold either:

- A first or upper second class honours degree (for example 1<sup>st</sup> or 2:1 BA(Hons), BSc(Hons), BEd(Hons), LLB) or,
- A Masters degree (for example MA, MSc, MBA) or,
- Evidence of prior practice or learning that is accepted by the Dean of Research.

An applicant whose entry award was not delivered in English, or non-native speaker of English shall be required to demonstrate proficiency in English at least to the level of an IELTS score of 7.0 or its equivalent to be registered as a Research Degree Student.

For an Applicant wishing to pursue a Research Degree in the areas of Chemistry, Computing and Mathematics, Computer Science, or Engineering, whose entry award was not delivered in English, or non-native speaker of English shall be required to demonstrate proficiency in English at least to the level of an IELTS score of 6.5 (Writing - 6.5 and no less than 6.0 in any other component) or its equivalent.

Students who do not meet the above criteria may be admitted to a Pre-Research Degree programme, provided confirmation is received from the Dean of Research and that the applicant has been able to provide:

- Evidence of a satisfactory general education
- The ability to undertake the proposed research programme
- Provides the names of two academic referees
- A approved Research Proposal
- Pass an English Language examination to demonstrate equivalency to the English entry requirement of a research programme

For students who wish to transfer from another University they will be required to present evidence of progress to date in their research programme of study and will be verified by the current institution.

## Completing an Expression of Interest Form

Applicants wishing to proceed with an application are required to complete an expression of interest form (this excludes students wishing to transfer from another institution please refer to entry requirements).

The 'Expression of Interest' will require an applicant to submit the following:

- Personal information (name, address, date of birth, nationality etc)
- Previous qualifications (details of all previous qualifications and copies)
- Academic References (details of at least two academic referees)
- Proposed mode of study (full time or part time or distant learning)
- Research Interest (Brief details on the subject/topic that you wish to undertake the research in maximum of 500 words)

For guidelines and expression of interest form – contact Student, Transnational and Research (STaR) Office 01902 323407 or visit [www.wlv.ac.uk/star](http://www.wlv.ac.uk/star)

## Acceptance of the Expression of Interest

Each Expression of Interest is assessed by the Faculty responsible for the subject area. The Faculty Postgraduate Research Tutor in consultation with the Associate Dean of Faculty will assess and approve the Expression of Interest. Assessment will normally be in the form of an interview based on the expression of interest received. Where an interview is not possible, the Expression of Interest needs to be approved by a minimum of 2 members of academic staff.

This process provides an opportunity for potential students to signal an interest in undertaking a research degree programme and to initiate discussions with appropriate staff. Potential students complete an 'Expression of Interest' form and submit this to the appropriate Faculty. Informal discussions may then take place between University staff and the potential research student provided that:

- (i) the proposed research falls within the scope of research conducted in the unit
- (ii) potential supervisors, with the capacity to undertake further supervision, can be identified, and
- (iii) the proposed research can be appropriately resourced.

A student may be admitted to a Research Degree Programme if:

- the student is appropriately qualified
- the research project is sound and has the potential to deliver a postgraduate research award within the relevant timescale
- the supervisory team is suitably qualified, experienced and has spare capacity for additional supervision(s),
- the student and supervisory team are in agreement at the outset of the project as to their overall roles and responsibilities
- the student has a long-term commitment to the project, and
- the proposal is appropriately resourced

## Possible Decisions:

<b>Approved - Proceed to PhD</b>	Develop a research proposal (applicant to complete a research proposal with the assistance of the supervisory team)	Conditional Offer letter sent by the Faculty Research Administrator to applicant. Supporting documents including copy of offer letter sent by the Faculty Research Administrator to the STAR office. STAR office set up record and send enrolment details to applicant.  International Applicants to note additional conditions of offer further information available at <a href="http://www.wlv.ac.uk/international">www.wlv.ac.uk/international</a> under Visa & Immigration Unconditional offer where visa and immigration are not necessary.
<b>Approved – Proceed to Pre-Research Programme</b>	In some cases an applicant may not meet the full entry requirements of a research degree program and will be offered a pre-research course tailored to the applicant needs to meet the entry requirements.	PhD Conditional Offer letter including pre-course as a condition sent to the applicant by the Faculty Research Administrator. STAR Office Research Programmes Administrator will send out the pre-research course offer letter and enrolment details. Further information available at <a href="http://www.wlv.ac.uk/international">www.wlv.ac.uk/international</a> under English Pre Sessional courses.
<b>Reject</b>	In some cases the University might have to reject an application. Every effort is made to help the applicant explore more suitable courses available.	A rejection letter is sent to the applicant by the Faculty Research Administrator.

## International Applicants Only

All nationals from non-EEA states who wish to come to the UK for any purpose and any length of time are required to obtain a visa (entry clearance) before coming to the UK.

### CAS Number

A visa application will require a 'Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies' (CAS) number to include on the application.

### How to request a CAS number

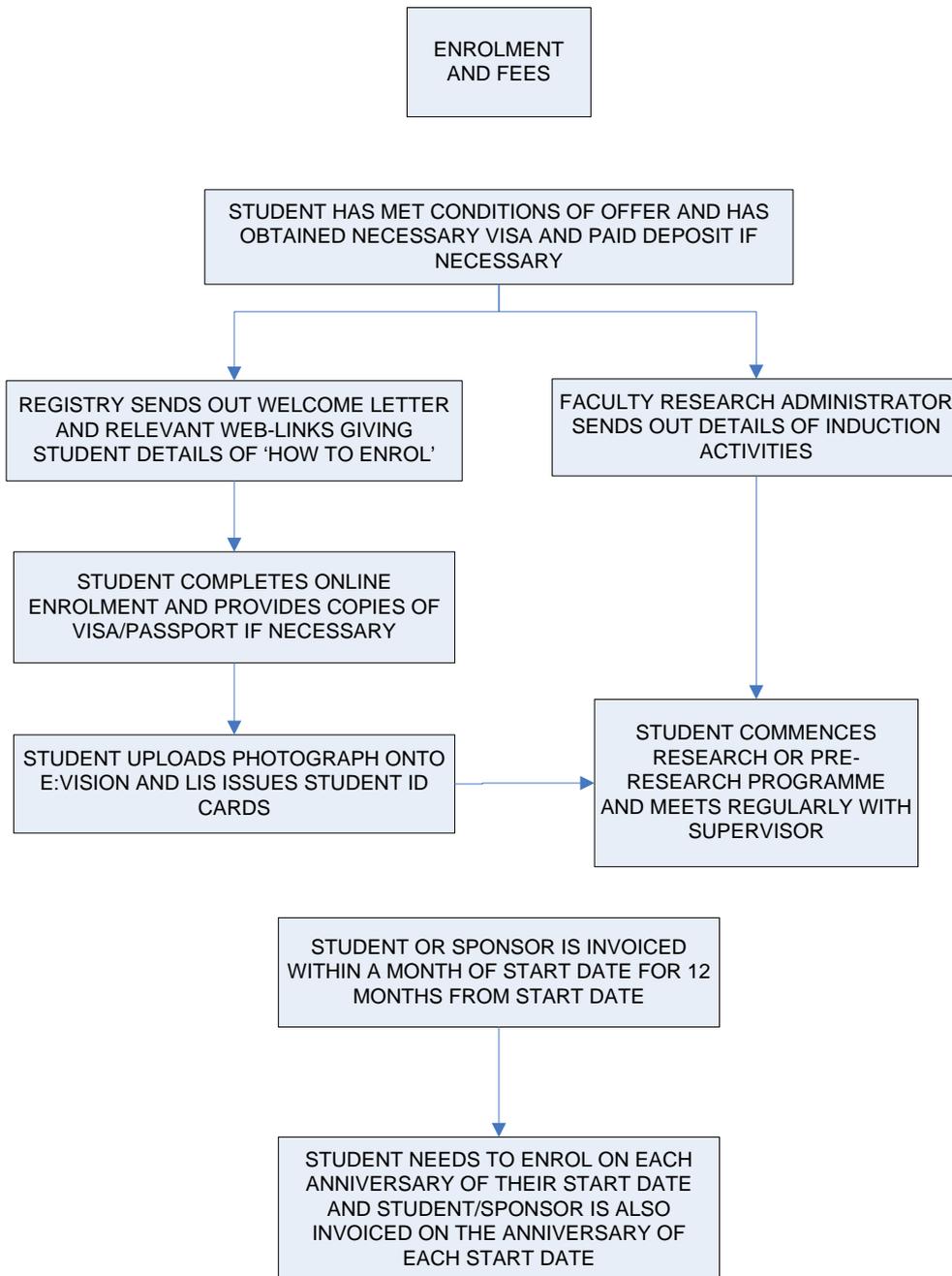
An applicant can request a CAS number online via eVision. In order to gain a CAS number all conditions on the offer letter have to be met including payment of the tuition fee deposit.

A CAS number can be applied for from three months before the start of the course and generated on eVision once all online stages have been completed, these will include:

- Candidates personal details
- the details of the course and the mode of study
- details of qualifications used to apply for the course
- details of the candidates passport
- details of the tuition fees and deposit paid
- the University of Wolverhampton Sponsor License Number and address

**Please note:** If a hard copy of the CAS letter is required by the candidate this can be downloaded from eVision once the CAS number has been generated.

## Section 2: Enrolment and Fees



## Registering For a Postgraduate Research Programme

### University Enrolment

All research students, whether full-time, part-time, fee-paying or sponsored and regardless of the area of study, must enrol as a student of the University at the beginning of their studies and at the beginning of the academic session for each subsequent year of their course. When a student enrolls, they will be undertaking to comply with the University's General Regulations, which apply to all students, and with the specific Regulations applying to the particular course of study.

### Instructions for accessing eVision

Once students have accepted their place at the University they will be able to enrol on-line using eVision, the University's on-line student system service for enrolment and access to information about the University. Students are encouraged to regularly check their eVision accounts for messages and amend contact details as appropriate.

Students requiring assistance while enrolling need to contact the eVision Helpdesk. To log onto eVision, students need to visit [www.wlv.ac.uk/eVision](http://www.wlv.ac.uk/eVision) - Username (7-digit student number) and Password.

To keep an eVision account secure, students are strongly advised to change their password. To change password students need to go to my eVision account section, click on 'Change Password' and follow the instructions on the screen. A new password should be at least 6 characters long and may include numbers and letters.

Once the online enrolment task has been completed students will need to report to the relevant Student Centre to complete the final part of enrolment.

### What to bring to the Student Centre

Students will need to bring the following for the last stage of enrolment:

1. Their passport with an appropriate visa (or ID card if EU).
2. The unconditional offer letter received from the University confirming their place at Wolverhampton.
3. A "Boarding Pass" which should be printed off via eVision when completing the online enrolment.
4. Appropriate certificate verifying the change in names (if applicable).
5. Documentary evidence showing who will be responsible for paying the tuition fee. This would also be useful as it may prevent the University from sending out unnecessary invoice.

Details of the student's induction activities will be available on-line or through the Faculty Research Administrator.

### Research Student ID Cards

Once students have completed the online enrolment they should upload their photo for their student ID card, and should do this as soon as possible.

The University requires a good quality passport style photo which must meet the following criteria:

1. The photo should be of the student alone
2. Colour, clear with good contrast
3. Head and shoulders only
4. Full face
5. Facing front
6. No hats, headwear or glasses unless the student normally wears them
7. At least 300px x 300px in size, which is approximately 3cm x 3cm at a resolution of 250 px/inch

8. jpeg format (filename.jpg) – Other types of file will be converted by the photo upload facility but will take much longer to upload, so it is recommended that the student uses JPEG format
9. Internet access to send the photo to the University using the [Photo Upload](#) facility

If students do not have a digital photo or a computer with internet access, they can go to one of the webcam stations in the Student Centres.

Once a photo has been uploaded the University's Learning Information Services (LIS) will dispatch the ID card or alternatively students can visit the Harrison Learning Centre Reception to collect their ID card.

### Communication

The University will communicate with students through email therefore it is essential that students ensure the University has the correct email address at all times. (This can be checked and amended through personal details on eVision.)

Before students can use University computers, they must register for an IT account. Students who have enrolled or accepted an unconditional offer can [register online for an account](#) at [www.wlv.ac.uk/its](http://www.wlv.ac.uk/its) by following the link. Once a student has registered for an IT Account, they can start using their University email account.

### Re-enrolment

Re-enrolment via eVision is required at the start of each subsequent academic year and is dependent on the satisfactory completion of Annual Progress Review. Once a Faculty/Research Institute has recommended that a student progress to the subsequent year they will notify the Student, Transnational and Research (STaR) Office, who will then update the student record. Failure to re-enrol promptly will result in the withdrawal of University facilities.

If the Annual Progress Review is not completed, or if progress is deemed to be unsatisfactory, a student may not be able to proceed to the next year of their studies and the 'at risk' procedure will automatically be invoked. During their studies, **they must also keep their local and home address, telephone numbers and email address up to date via eVision**, as the University may need to contact them if there are any problems with enrolment or registration queries. For International students additional requirements will apply. Please contact the Student, Transnational and Research (STaR) Office.

### Research Fees

Unless a student is in receipt of a bursary, they will be liable for fees at the appropriate rate (and, if applicable, bench fees). They should note that research student fees cover a 12-month period and will be invoiced annually. The University also offers its students the choice of paying fees in instalments. To arrange an instalment plan they will need to email the University's Finance department at [FNC@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:FNC@wlv.ac.uk).

For further information on how to pay your fees is available on the University website <http://www.wlv.ac.uk/default.aspx?page=20896>

If a student has not paid the fees for a year of their course, they will not be permitted to re-enrol for subsequent years until the debt has been paid in full. **Please note that fee-paying continues up to the point of submission of the completed thesis; a student must be enrolled at the University until conferment of the degree (or, exceptionally, withdrawal).**

Please note that failure to pay fees by the stated deadline will lead to the student's access to University facilities including IT, Learning Centre and Laboratories being withdrawn until such fees have been paid or an arrangement made with the University's Finance Department.

### **Fee Liability**

Research Students studying for a MPhil or PhD can start at multiple points throughout the year. Therefore their invoice date and fee liability will depend on their individual start date.

Professional Doctorate students tend to start at the beginning of the academic year so the guidelines for these students can be more closely aligned to a standard postgraduate student.

### **MPhil/PhD Students**

Start date for students will be the 1st of a particular month. Students will be invoiced from the start of the month and on the anniversary of this date.

Liability points (to closely match other guidelines on this subject)

- Withdraw/Leave of Absence between Start date and + 3 months = 25%
- Withdraw/Leave of Absence between Month 4 and end of Month 6 = 50%
- Withdraw/Leave of Absence between Month 7 and end of Month 12 = 100%

So a Student who starts on April 1st – will be immediately liable for 25% of the fee, they will then be liable for another 25% from July 1st and the final 50% from October 1st.

### **Bursaries**

Students, who are eligible for any University bursary must repay all or part of their bursary if they withdraw, transfer or there is any other reason why they are no longer entitled to receive the bursary.

Students must repay any part of their bursary on a pro-rata basis. This will be determined by the number of whole months that a student has completed.

Therefore a student whose Research Degree starts on April 1st and receives a bursary, would have to repay the entire bursary if they withdrew on April 10th. If they withdrew on May 1st, then they would have to repay 11/12ths

### **Professional Doctorate Students**

Full time students would be subject to the same guidelines regarding fees as postgraduate students and have liability points 3 times a year based on their full time fee.

In general terms, part time students would be liable depending on the modules registered in a particular block. Where a module spans more than one academic year, then care needs to be taken to ensure that the student is charged appropriately. One suggestion is that they are invoiced for the full amount for the modules that they have started in an academic year (as this will tend to be for a lower fee than subsequent years), however on request they could ask to pay a pro-rata amount for the module that spans 2 academic years.

## Maximum periods for MPhil and PhD Registration

The University's Regulations stipulate the maximum periods of registration for the University research degrees, effective for all students whose start date was on or after 1 January 2004. Any extension request to the maximum registration will need to be approved by the Academic Registrar and reported to the University's Research Awards Committee.

Full Time Students	Normal	Maximum
PhD	3 years	4 years
Professional /Practitioner Doctorate	3 years	4 years
MPhil	18 months	2 years
Higher Masters Degree	1 year	2 years
Pre-Research programme	6 months	6 months

Part Time Students	Normal	Maximum
PhD	4 years	8 years
Professional /Practitioner Doctorate	4 years	8 years
MPhil	2 years	4 years
Higher Masters Degree	2 years	4 years
Pre-Research programme	6 months	6 months

Students may study on a full or part- time basis (this will be set out in the offer letter).

- Full-time students will normally devote on average 35 hours per week over a minimum of 45 weeks per year to the programme.
- Part-time students will normally devote 15-18 hours per week over a minimum of 45 weeks per year to the programme.

Students may study at a distance for all or part of their registration, with the agreement of the Dean of Research. Such students will be required to follow a programme of study agreed by the Dean of Research.

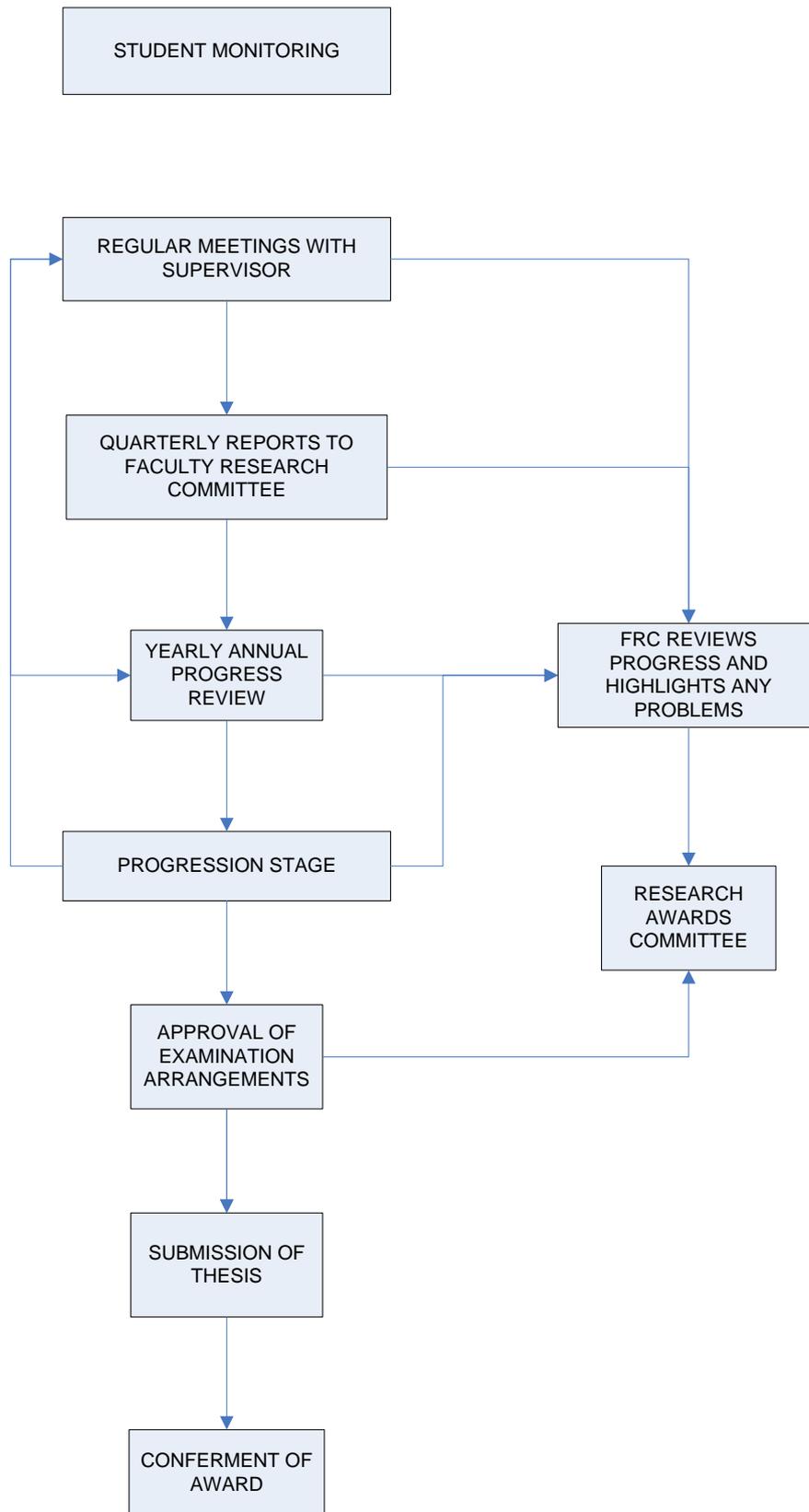
Where a student chooses to change their mode of study the maximum period of registration will be calculated pro rata.

Where a student has been granted permission to take a period of leave of absence, in accordance with section 9 (research regulations), the maximum period of registration will be amended by the relevant period.

Where a research student can demonstrate that s/he has achieved all or some of the learning outcomes through research training and personal development undertaken outside the University, the Dean of Research may recommend that the student be accredited for such prior achievement and thus be deemed to have completed all or part of the specified programme of research training. This recommendation may also consider a reduced registration period.

Any student who is not registered, (including those on a Leave of Absence – see section 9, research regulations), will not be covered by the University Insurance policy or by the University Health & Safety policy and will be excluded from their study, research, supervision and direction at the University.

### Section 3: Student Monitoring



## The Supervisory Team

Full-time students are expected to meet their Director of Studies (together with the other members of the supervisory team, as appropriate) at least 9 times per year to discuss their research. Part-time research students should meet their Director of Studies (and other supervisors) at least 5 times per year. In fact, these are minima the Director of Studies may wish to meet their students more frequently, especially in the early stages of their studies. During these meetings, you can expect to discuss the academic detail of the students work and how they are progressing in relation to the plan, which has been established at the outset.

A supervisory meeting record will be logged on eVision. This record will include a summary of progress to date (referenced as appropriate to the previously agreed plan of work), commentary on the above indicators of progress, actions required, and agreed targets for the next phase of work, with a draft agenda and date for the next meeting. The Director of Studies is ultimately responsible for ensuring that these records are kept up to date.

## Annual Progress Review

Each year, every research student is issued with an Annual Progress Review Form. **ALL** research students **MUST** complete this form each year until their award is conferred.

On the form, a student should give a summary of progress made and an indicative programme of the following year's work, and highlight any problems brought to the attention of the Director of Studies. Failure to return the Annual Progress Review Form will automatically invoke the 'Proceed with Caution' procedure. **Please note that the University considers it good practice for students and their DoS to complete the relevant part of the Annual Progress Review Form together during one of their regular supervisory meetings.**

Faculties will designate two independent members of staff to interview each student as part of the annual review. Students should check with their Director of Studies the exact procedure followed in their Faculty/Research Institute/Centre, as this can vary according to the discipline.

The University Research Awards Sub-Committee, which will meet at least six times each year, will consider:

- The performance of students currently subject to the 'Proceed with Caution' procedure
- The annual progress reviews of all students
- The performance of students at the 'progression' stage
- The approval of student examination arrangements
- The confirmation of awards of students completing their studies

If the Supervisor judges that a student's ability to progress is endangered, they will declare that student to be subject to the 'Proceed with Caution' procedure. A student may be declared subject to the 'Proceed with Caution' procedure under the following circumstances:

- They have not met the requirements to satisfy the Supervisor that they should proceed, as outlined in the Research Handbooks;
- They have repeatedly failed to meet deadlines or quality thresholds as specified as part of the informal Supervisory review of progress.

When a student is declared subject to the 'Proceed with Caution' procedure The Dean of Research will be advised, and an action plan agreed. Where a student continues to meet the criteria for 'Proceed with Caution' procedure for two or more months, the issue will be reported to the University Research Awards Sub-committee.

Where the 'Proceed with Caution' procedure does not result in an improvement in the student's ability to progress, the Dean of Research may recommend to the Research Awards Sub-committee and, as appropriate,

the Professional Doctorate Progression and Award Board, that the withdrawal procedure be initiated.

## Progression of Research Programme

The progression stage will normally take place by the end of 21 months (45 months for part time students) from date of registration and in combination with the relevant APR. At this point there should be sufficient evidence to assess the student's performance and potential to complete at the appropriate level. Failure to submit the required evidence within these periods will result in the student being made subject to the 'Proceed with Caution' procedure.

The Faculty Research Committee also has the authority to recommend that a student's registration be withdrawn if satisfactory progress has not been made. This would normally occur after the failure of a student to abide by the 'Proceed with Caution' procedures. Such procedures may be invoked in cases such as an unsatisfactory progression, or an unsatisfactory Annual Progress Review form or its non-completion.

### Role of the independent assessors and the Faculty Research Committee (FRC)

The independent assessors, nominated by the FRC, review the application, together with the evidence provided and the oral presentation. The independent assessors provide evaluative comments and a recommendation as to the outcome of the application, which is then considered by the appropriate FRC. Where the independent assessors highlight concerns or criticisms, these must be addressed with the supervisors and yourself prior to recommendations being forwarded to the FRC. The FRC will consider the Progression application and recommend:

- proceed as proposed
- proceed subject to changes/amendments being made (may require a change in the research degree sought)
- subject to 'proceed with caution' process
- complete as MPhil

## Recording student engagement on e:Vision

Student engagement and progress has to be monitored by inputting contact points onto e:Vision. Although important for all students, this is particularly important for International Tier 4 students where the University has to demonstrate to Government agencies that these students are engaging with the University.

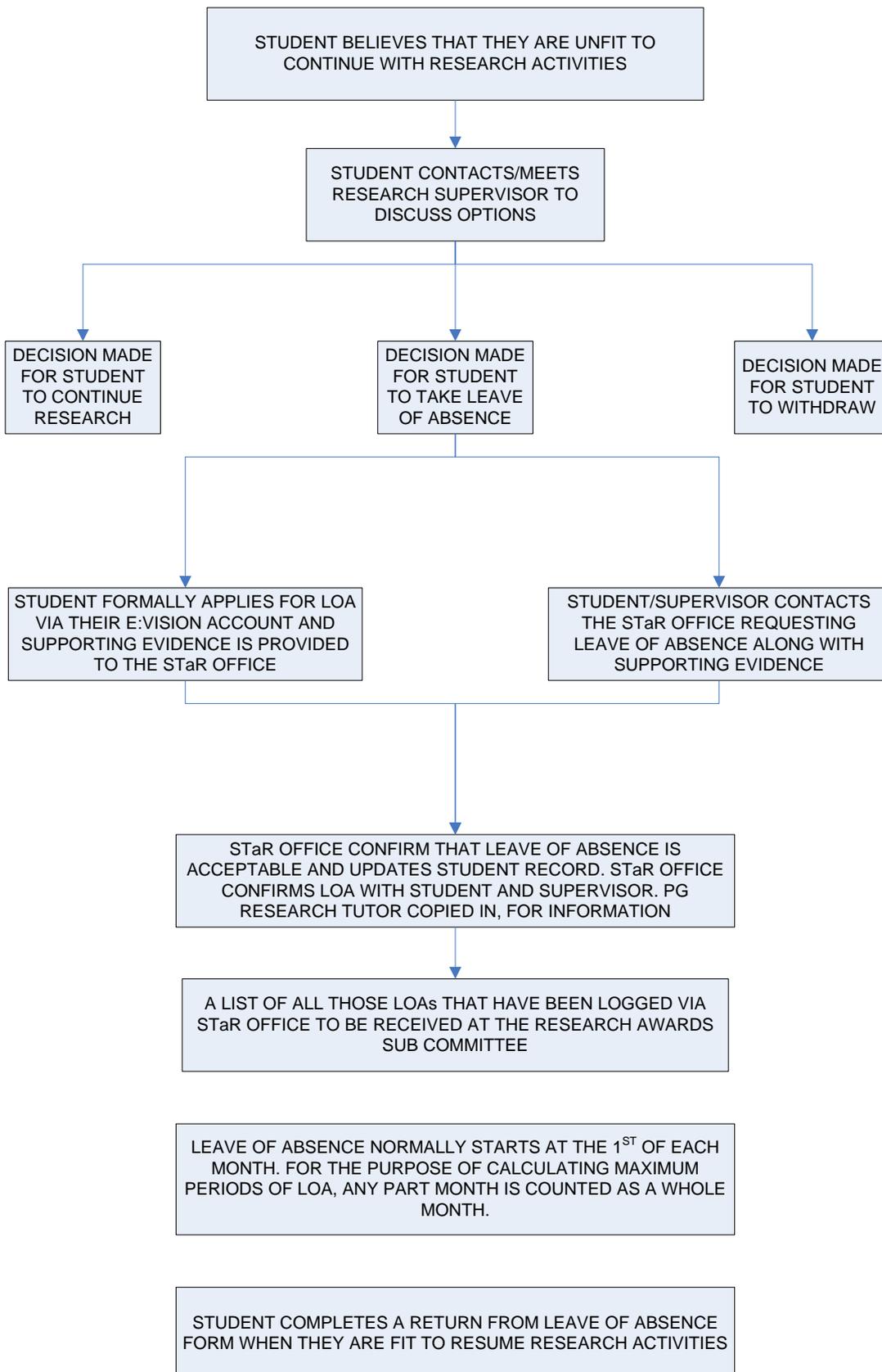
The following timeline is the process in place for ensuring that the student remains compliant. (Please note that if a student has returned to their home country then they should update their address via e:Vision. Students currently undertaking research overseas are still expected to maintain regular contact with their supervisor, but these must be logged as skype/email/telephone.)

Following enrolment	students are e-mailed with an overview of process
No recorded engagement after 40 days	e-mail sent to Director of Studies
No recorded engagement after 50 days	e-mail sent to Director of Studies and student
No recorded engagement after 60 days	'Final warning' e-mail to Director of Studies and student
No recorded engagement after 70 days	e-mail to student, supervisor and STaR Office with a series of tasks culminating in a curtailment decision being made by the UKVI Compliance and Oversight Panel

**For information on how to access and use the eVision Research Supervision log please see Appendix 1.**

## Section 4: Student 'movements'

### Leave of Absence



## Leave of absence, Parental Leave and Jury Service

The University's regulations set expectations in relation to successful completion periods. In the case of the PhD and Professional/Practitioner Doctorates the maximum periods of registration are four years full-time (eight years part-time). In the case of the MPhil the maximum registration period is two years full-time (four years part-time). If you do not submit your thesis within the maximum period of registration, you will not be allowed to submit late and you will be asked to withdraw from your research degree. If you are in receipt of a bursary you may also be required to pay back your fees for non-completion.

However the University realises that there are circumstances when you are temporarily not able to continue with your studies for a period of time, because of a change in your personal circumstances. In these circumstances you may take a break from your research degree and resume your studies when your circumstances allow you to do.

If this scenario applies to you then you should discuss with your supervisor whether taking a temporary 'leave of absence' from your studies is appropriate.

The maximum length of period of absence that you can take at any one time is 12 months. The maximum total period over your research degree is 24 months. If you take the maximum 12 months then you must return to your research studies for a minimum of 3 months before taking any further periods of leave of absence.

Periods of leave undertaken due to statutory childcare (including maternity leave, paternity leave, shared parental leave and adoptive leave) will not be counted towards the maximum total period of 24 months, although the maximum registration period will be amended accordingly.

After agreeing this option with your supervisor, you must apply for a leave of absence via your e: Vision account. You will have to confirm that you will not be undertaking any research activities whilst on leave of absence. You will need to give the reason why you are requesting leave of absence and the date that you believe that you will return to your studies. Leave of absence will not be granted retrospectively.

### **Please note that you will need to provide a detailed explanation for taking leave of absence.**

Although the University reserves the right to ask for evidence to support a request for Leave of Absence, it would not normally do so. However when a request is made that would take the total period of Leave of Absence to over 2 years (because of the parental leave clause), then evidence will be sought confirming that the student is eligible for parental leave.

If a leave of absence is approved, your liability to pay tuition fees will cease from the point of your leave of absence and will be reactivated on the date of your return. Students in receipt of a university bursary will not receive any payments whilst on leave of absence. If you are an international student on a Tier 4 visa then you will be required to return home whilst on leave of absence and your visa is likely to be curtailed.

Your request to take a leave of absence and the decision to grant this or not, will be reported to your Director of Studies along with your Faculty Postgraduate Research Tutor. It will also be reported to the Faculty Research Committee and at the relevant University Committee.

Any leave of absence will be granted in month-long blocks and then added to the registration period. Whilst on a leave of absence, you will have restricted access to University services and facilities, including your Supervisor in respect of research work, but you are encouraged to keep in touch with your Supervisor for pastoral support. Leave of absence should not be used to cover holiday leave, research visits, fieldwork visits, etc.

If a student has an outstanding debt to the University that they cannot clear before the enrolment deadline date, then they must take a Leave of Absence.

Whilst on a Leave of Absence, any outstanding debt remains due and may be referred to a Debt Collection Agency. Any outstanding debt must be cleared in order for a student to re-enrol.

**Please note that if a leave of absence is approved, you are still required to complete the Annual Progress Review Form.**

## Returning from a Leave of Absence

You are expected to notify the University at the end of the leave of absence that you wish to return to your studies. Alternatively, at this time, you may request an extension to the Leave of Absence provided it does not extend the period of leave beyond the limits outlined in regulation 9.3.

International students are advised to contact the Visa & Immigration Support Officer for advice about their visa before returning to their studies.

Students returning from a period of Leave of Absence may wish to liaise with the Student Support and Wellbeing Team or the University's Counselling Service to ensure that the University is aware of any relevant circumstances for which they may be able to provide support.

If you fail to return from a Leave of Absence and enrol within 14 calendar days of the expected date of return you will be considered to have withdrawn and will be de-registered from the course.

## Jury Service

Eligible students may be summoned by HM Courts and Tribunal Service for jury service during your studies. It is up to you to establish whether you can either accommodate the request for jury service or whether it is not reasonable at the time. In these circumstances, you must return the 'Reply to the Jury Summons' and ask for jury service to be deferred to a later date or to be excused altogether.

If a request for deferral is turned down, there is the right of appeal when appearing in court to serve on the jury as the presiding judge has the discretion to excuse jury members who they deem to have compelling reasons not to serve at that point.

If your initial request for excusal has been refused you should discuss this with your Director of Studies who can provide a supporting statement outlining why you should be excused (e.g. if the trial is likely to be longer than the statutory two weeks which would impact on current field or lab based research or that the service would conflict with a submission deadline or viva).

Periods of leave undertaken due to statutory jury service will not be counted towards the maximum total period of 24 months, although the maximum total period of 24 months, although the maximum registration period will be amended accordingly.

## How to apply for a Leave of Absence

If you feel that you need to take a break from your studies it is advisable to first speak to your research supervisor to discuss your options. If you then decide to apply for a leave of absence you should do so formally by submitting an application via your e:Vision account to the STaR Office along with any supporting evidence.

Log-in the e:Vision and click on the Course Administration tab and request leave (see example below)

**Leave of Absence/Return from Leave of Absence**

- By taking **Leave of Absence** you are temporarily withdrawing yourself from the University for a significant period of time with the intention of returning to the same course at a future date. There are a number of implications (particularly financial ones) in taking this action, so you are strongly recommended to read the **relevant guidelines** and seek advice from your Faculty Student Services before considering this action.
- If you require any advice on **resuming** your studies, then please contact your Faculty Student Services via the e:Vision helpdesk.

Course	Status	Mode of Study	
Postgraduate research in English Language and Literature	C	Part-Time	<a href="#">Request Leave</a>

Read the guidance and confirm you wish to continue with your request (see example below)

The screenshot shows the top navigation bar with links for Student Home, Programme & Modules, Course Administration, Finance & Bursaries, Graduation, and a search icon. A 'Logged In' indicator is visible. The main content area is titled 'Leave of Absence - Important Information' and contains the following text:

You are about to submit a request for Leave of Absence. You should only consider this option if you are taking a significant break from your studies but your intention is to return to the same course at a future date.

Shorter term breaks from your studies are likely to be better resolved by applying for either for a **short term extension** short term extension (7 days max) or **extenuating circumstances**.

Taking a Leave of Absence is likely to have more serious implications and you should only consider applying if you are fully aware of these factors. Please read the **Leave of Absence Guidelines** or consult with your Faculty Student Services before applying for Leave of Absence.

**Enrolment & Fees**

If you are enrolled/in attendance on the first day of term then you will be liable for tuition fees subject to the terms outlined in the **2017/8 Fee Liability, Refunds and Debtor Policy**.

All Leave of Absence requests must be made on-line via this task. No other form of notification will be considered valid and all claims will be subject to the above conditions.

I have read and understand the Leave of Absence regulations and wish to continue with my request.\*

If the Leave of Absence is approved the STaR Office will confirm this to you, your supervisor and your Postgraduate Research Tutor for information. A leave of absence normally starts at the 1st of each month, and for the purpose of calculating maximum periods of LOA, any part month is counted as a whole month.

One you are able to return to your studies you should complete the return from leave of absence task in e:Vision following the steps above.

## Exceptional requests to extend maximum registration period

There may be very exceptional circumstances (Section 10 of the Research Degree Regulations) when a student cannot submit their thesis within the maximum period of registration, but the leave of absence process outlined above is not appropriate. This may be either a) because they have already exceeded the maximum length of absence or b) they need a longer period to complete their research because of a setback for which the University takes full responsibility (e.g. equipment failure).

It must be stressed, however, that extensions to maximum registration are only granted in very exceptional circumstances. Extensions will not be granted for what might be considered 'unexceptional' circumstances such as everyday life events, work pressure, financial difficulties, academic failure, and poor project/time management). It should also be noted that extensions will not be granted retrospectively.

Any request for an extension should be discussed with the Director of Studies in the first instance. If the Director of Studies supports the request then s/he will need to make a formal request with supporting evidence to the Dean of Research and Academic Registrar (or their nominees). The request and the decision made will be communicated to the student by the Director of Studies and formally recorded by the STaR Office. It will be reported to the Research Awards Sub Committee and, where relevant, the Professional Doctorate Award and Progression Board.

If successful, a new maximum registration date will be calculated that takes account of the period granted by the Dean of Research. Students are still liable for fees for any extended period of registration. If the request is unsuccessful, the student should submit their thesis on or before the date of the original maximum registration. If this date has already passed, the student and the Director of Studies will receive a letter to inform them that the student will be withdrawn from the programme.

## Change to Mode of Study

A research student may apply for a change to their mode of study via eVision. All students must seek advice from their supervisory team before proceeding with an application to change to their mode of attendance.

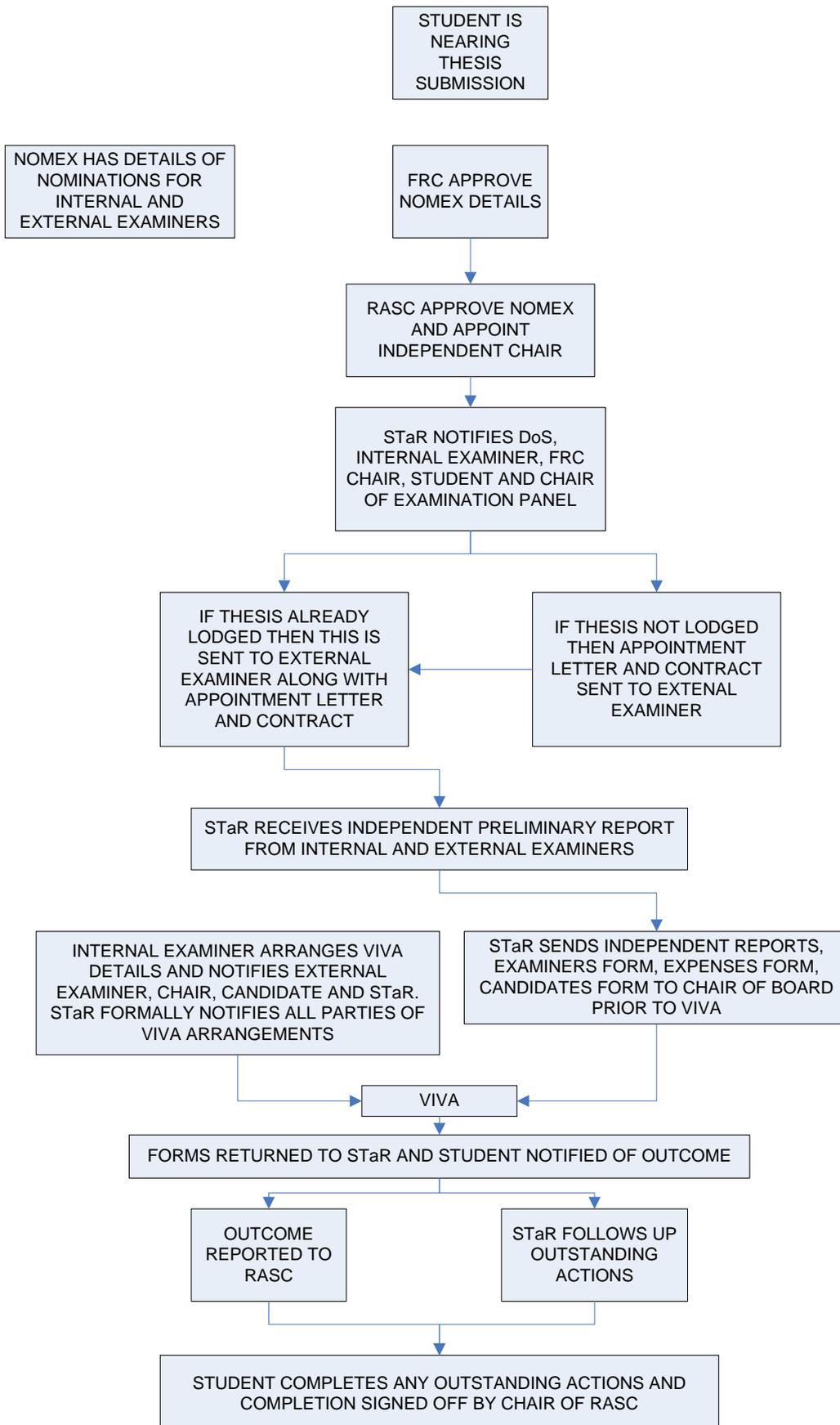
The change to mode of attendance request must be submitted to the Student, Transnational and Research (STaR) Office.

## Withdrawal of Registration

We hope that all students will be able to complete their research programme without any disruption. However, there may be circumstances where they feel that they are no longer in a position to continue their research and will be unlikely to resume in the foreseeable future. In these cases students should their options with the DoS and/or PGRT in the first instance.

Students can withdraw from their studies by completing the withdrawal task via their eVision account and submitting it to the Student, Transnational and Research (STaR) Office.

## Section 5: Examinations



## The Examination & Thesis

### Viva Voce

The *viva voce* is an oral examination which takes place after the submission of the thesis at which the student will be expected to defend the work of their thesis. During the *viva voce*, the Examiners will wish to test the general knowledge of the field and to question the student on matters of detail arising from the thesis.

The *viva* will normally take place in the University. However, the University must be convinced the location and *modus operandi* are appropriate, that student and their Director of Studies have been properly consulted beforehand, and that both happy to proceed in this way.

#### Who will be present at the Viva Voce

There will be a number of people present at the *viva voce*:

1. The Internal Examiner
2. The External Examiner (In some cases there can be two external examiners)
3. The Independent Chair

No member of the supervisory team may be appointed as an examiner and they cannot attend *viva voce* unless requested. In such a case, **the student** must seek **approval, in writing, at the point of submission of the thesis**. If the request is granted, the Director of Studies will attend as an **observer only** and will not participate in any way in the examination process.

### Submission of Thesis

Students are expected to complete and write up their entire thesis by the end of their maximum registration period provided that their examination arrangements are approved and in place before submission. **(Please note STaR Office will advise students accordingly)**. If a student fails to submit by the end of their maximum registration period they may not be permitted to submit their thesis later. Students are advised to seek advice from their supervisory team if they feel they may not submit on time. Students funded by industrial sponsors or by a bursary need to seek advice from their postgraduate tutors and inform their sponsors regarding their failure to submit within the permitted registration period. **Please note students who fail to submit on time may be liable for fees outside the registration period.**

#### Thesis submission requirements

1. The thesis shall be presented in English.
2. There shall be a table of contents and associated page numbers at the front of the thesis.
3. There shall be a one page abstract of approximately 300 words included at the start of the thesis which shall provide a synopsis of the thesis stating the nature and scope of the work undertaken and of the contribution made to the knowledge of the subject treated.
4. The thesis shall include a statement of the candidate's objective and shall acknowledge published or other sources of material consulted (including an appropriate bibliography) and any assistance received.
5. Where a candidate's research programme is part of a collaborative group project, the thesis shall indicate clearly the candidate's individual contribution and the extent of the collaboration.
6. The student shall be free to publish or exhibit material in advance of the thesis but reference shall be made in the thesis to any such work. **If any part of a candidate's work is published, the necessary elements of the copyright must be retained, so as to enable the final thesis be made openly accessible online through WIRE (Wolverhampton Intellectual Repository and E-Theses) and shared with the British Library's ETHOS service.**

7. Where the thesis contains copyright protected material, this should be fully acknowledged and the thesis will contain a copy of the written permission to publish the copyrighted material in the appendices.
8. The thesis will include evidence that the appropriate ethical approval has been granted.
9. Theses shall normally be in A4 format. In exceptional cases the University Research Awards Committee may give permission for a thesis to be submitted in another format where it is satisfied that the contents of the thesis can be better expressed in that format;
10. Copies of the thesis shall be presented in a permanent and legible printed form. Any copies produced by photocopying must also be permanent and legible. The size of character used in the main text, including displayed matter and notes, shall not be less than 2.0mm for capitals and 1.5mm for x-height (that is, the height of lower-case x).
11. The thesis may be printed on one or both sides of the paper which shall normally be white, of good quality and sufficiently opaque to avoid show-through;
12. The margin at the binding edge of the page shall not be less than 40mm; other margins shall not be less than 15mm;
13. Spacing of text should be consistent with clarity; in the main body of the text, this should normally be double-spaced.
14. Pages shall be numbered consecutively through the main text including photographs and/or diagrams included as whole pages;
15. The title page shall give the following information (see specimen later):
  - the full title of the thesis;
  - the full name and qualifications of the author;
  - that the degree is awarded by the University;
  - the award for which the degree is submitted in partial fulfilment of its requirements;
  - the Collaborating Establishment(s), if any;
  - the month and year of submission; and
  - statement of copyright.

## Access to Theses

Following successful examination, the University will archive the thesis in WIRE. WIRE is an open access online collection of research outputs by members of the University of Wolverhampton. The e-thesis will be shared with the British Library's EThOS service (which increases the visibility of the UK's doctoral research theses) and will be freely-accessible to readers on the Web through aggregation services such as CORE and Google Scholar.

## Restrictions on access to Theses

If the thesis includes materials which are: politically, commercially, personally or industrially sensitive, or protected materials relating to questions of national security you may request that access to it be restricted for a period of time. A thesis shall not be restricted in this way in order to protect research leads. In some cases, where an industrial sponsor funds a student's studies or the research project on which the student is working, the contract which the University has drawn up with an industrial sponsor will stipulate any such a restriction.

An application for restricted access must be made at the earliest opportunity and at the latest when the examiners are appointed via an approved NOMEX form. An application should be submitted to the STaR Office using the form '[Application for Restricted Access of a Research Degree Thesis](#)'. Each application is considered by the Dean of Research in accordance with the grounds outlined in regulation 4.9. The period approved shall not normally exceed two years from the date of conferment of the Award. Where a shorter period would be adequate the Dean of Research shall not automatically grant the maximum two year period.

Where the Dean of Research has agreed that the confidential nature of the candidate's work is such as to preclude the thesis being made openly accessible online through WIRE (Wolverhampton Intellectual Repository and E-Theses) (and Collaborating Establishment, if any) and via the British Library's EThOS service, the thesis shall, immediately on completion of the programme of work, be retained by the University on restricted access and, for a time not exceeding the approved period, shall only be made available to those who were directly involved in the project. A data only record will appear in WIRE (including author, title, keywords etc.) until the restricted access period has expired. The copies of the thesis submitted for examination shall remain the property of the University but the copyright of the thesis shall be vested in the candidate.

## Where to submit

Students should submit two copies (one for each examiner, in some cases three copies) of their thesis to the **STaR Office (MX Student Centre)**. Copies of the thesis should be submitted in a temporary, but secure, form of binding such as spiral binding and also accompanied with a completed 'Submission and Receipt of Research Degree Thesis' form.

**(For all research forms please visit the [STaR Office website](#) or telephone the STaR Office on 01902 323407 or 323381)**

If the thesis meets with all of the requirements for submission, copies will be sent to each of the examiners who will undertake a preliminary assessment. The internal examiner will arrange the date of the viva voce and notify the student accordingly. If the preliminary reports are satisfactory, the viva voce will take place and a recommendation will be made in accordance with the regulations. The five possible outcomes are detailed in the regulations for the award of MPhil and PhD, along with timescales for carrying out the recommendations.

When the examiners have confirmed that they are satisfied with both the thesis (including any modifications or revisions required by them following the viva voce), and the performance of the student at the oral viva voce, the student must arrange for an electronic copy of the final approved version of their thesis to be submitted to the **STaR Office (MX)**.

A degree cannot be awarded until the student has carried out all corrections to the Examiners' satisfaction, and submitted the electronic copy and the necessary paperwork.

The STaR Office will forward all paperwork for conferment to the University Research Awards Committee. Dates for the committee can be found on the University Committees webpage <http://www.wlv.ac.uk/Default.aspx?page=23369>

### **e-Thesis submission requirements**

Following successful examination the STaR Office will request submission an electronic copy/copies of the thesis, the ethesis, for deposit in (Wolverhampton Intellectual Repository and E-Theses). Once the e-thesis is deposited in WIRE it is published online so it can be accessed by scholars and others anywhere in the world.

It is the responsibility of the candidate to send a copy of the thesis to any Collaborating Establishment.

The format of the e-thesis should be as follows:

- A single merged file as either a Word document or PDF file, in the following order:
  - Title Page
  - Abstract
  - Table of Contents
  - Acknowledgements (optional - unless there is formal collaboration in which case this is required)
  - Chapters in sequential order
  - Bibliography
  - All paginated sequentially
- Submitted to Registry either
  - e-mailed as an attachment to a specified address (details issued following successful examination)
  - sent or handed in on a CD
  - sent or handed in on a memory stick
  - Any non-text elements should be submitted as a separate file

The e-thesis should be submitted along with signed and dated hard copies of the:

- (i) E-Thesis Deposit Agreement
- (ii) Thesis title page
- (iii) a Declaration Document

Prior to submitting the e-thesis, candidates should ensure that they read the online guidance (<https://www.wlv.ac.uk/lib/research/preparing-your-thesis/>) on preparing the thesis for deposit on WIRE for information on how to identify copyrighted material that needs to be cleared or removed from the deposited version of the thesis.

Third party copyright material used in the thesis (e.g. material created by someone else such as photographs, maps, extracts from another work etc.) must be either cleared for deposit with the copyright holder or removed from the thesis before deposit.

This does not affect the inclusion of fully referenced third party material in the thesis submitted for examination purposes, it only applies to the deposit of the thesis into WIRE. This material can remain in the hardcopy, examination version of the thesis as long as it is considered unpublished.

Candidates must also ensure that personal or sensitive data that relates to identifiable individuals has also been removed from your thesis before deposit (<https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/key-definitions/what-is-personal-data/>.)

Further advice and assistance with clearing third party material or removing personal data can be sought from the University's Scholarly Communications team at [wire@wlv.ac.uk](mailto:wire@wlv.ac.uk).

If material has been removed from the version of the thesis that will be deposited, the candidate will need to submit two copies of the thesis for deposit, which are clearly identified in the file name as 'full unedited version' and 'redacted version'. The full examination version will then be archived under embargo (not published online) and the redacted version will be published online.

The full unedited version must be identical to the copy submitted for examination, save for any amendments approved by the examiners, and the redacted version (if applicable) must have copyrighted material or personal data removed.

## Section 6: Graduation

Once a student has been conferred with their award, the STaR Office will process the award record for graduation.

There are two periods for Graduation, Autumn (September) and Spring (April). Dependent on the date of the conferment each student will be invited to their Faculty ceremony. Students will need to log into their eVision account click on the 'Graduation' link to view the graduation details.

### What information you find under the Graduation link

1. Details of the ceremony – students will be asked to accept or decline their invite
2. Declined invite – students will be allowed to request their certificate
3. Ticket purchase information – email notification will be sent out to students when tickets are available to purchase online for guests. Guest ticket price - £15 each.

### Certificate Information

PhD students are encouraged to double check the title of their thesis at examination stage. If the title is incorrect please inform the STaR Office.

### International Students Only

We understand our international students may want their families to attend their graduation ceremonies and in order to meet these requirements we have a section under Graduation 'apply for visa/immigration support letter'. International students will need to apply for this letter in order to invite families to their ceremony.

**(Number of letters sent out will be dependent on number of guest tickets purchased. Students will need to confirm the address they need the letters sending too).**

Once the request has been submitted our Student Centre's will process and issue the letters.

### Important Information about Graduation

The venue for our Graduation ceremonies is:

Wolverhampton Grand Theatre (5min walking distance from City Campus)  
Lichfield Street  
Wolverhampton  
WV1 1DE

### Academic Robes

All students are required to hire an academic robe for their graduation ceremony. **(Students should note they will not be allowed to attend graduation without a robe).**

Academics robes can be hired from [www.wippellgownhire.co.uk](http://www.wippellgownhire.co.uk)

Robes are collected and returned to MC Building, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, City Campus. (Sign posted).

## Professional Photography

H Tempest Ltd provides the professional photography service for graduates and families on the day. Digital photos are taken of each finalist as they are presented with their award, and these are made available for purchase from MC Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, City Campus. (Sign posted).

For more information please visit [www.tempest-graduations.co.uk](http://www.tempest-graduations.co.uk)

Students are advised to register their attendance for their ceremony at least 30 minutes before the start of their ceremony.

Guests are also advised to arrive at least 30 minutes before the start of the ceremony. Guests arriving once the ceremony is underway may not be permitted into the auditorium until a suitable break in the proceedings.

## Appendix 1: How to access the eVision Research Supervision Log

### Research Supervisor Logs – Add a New Log

To add a new log click the ‘Update’ button.

Student Code	Student Name	Course	View All Meetings	Update Research Log
0300002/22	RICHARDS-TESCJ	BU020R01UV	<input type="button" value="View"/>	<input type="button" value="Update"/>

Complete all sections of the form.

- Select the Type of Meeting from the drop down list.
- Please only select meeting if you have met the student face to face in the UK
- Enter the date of the meeting using the format DD/MM/YY
- Add in the names of those attending the meeting
- Add the notes of the meeting into the ‘Meeting Notes’ field
- Click ‘Next’

**Create New Meeting - Caroline Richards-Test Record (0300002)** ← Exit

---

Type of Meeting:

Date of Meeting (in format DD/MM/YY):

Meeting Attendees:

Meeting Notes:

---

**Previous Meetings**

Meeting Date	Meeting Type	Meeting Attendees	Meeting Notes
06/Nov/2014	Meeting	Test 1 Test 2 Test 3 Test 4	Test
07/Nov/2014	Meeting	Test 1 Test 2 Test 3 Test 4	Test
08/Nov/2014	Meeting	Test 1 Test 2	Test

If ‘Date of Meeting’ or ‘Meeting Notes’ are left blank, the log will not be stored and the following error messages will be displayed. If the ‘Meeting Attendees’ fields do not have at least one attendee entered an error message will also be displayed and the log will not be stored.

Create New Meeting - Caroline Richards-Test Record (0300002)

Type of Meeting

Date of Meeting (in format DD/MM/YY)  \* please do not leave blank

Meeting Attendees

\* please do not leave blank

Meeting Notes

\* please do not leave blank

Previous Meetings +

Are you sure?

Type of Meeting	Meeting
Date of Meeting	09/11/14
Attendees	Test 1 Test 2 Test 3 Test 4
Meeting Notes	Test

If any of the details displayed are incorrect, the 'Edit' button should be clicked. When the 'Edit' button is clicked, the user will be returned to the 'Create New Meeting' screen.

If all information is correct, click 'Save and the meeting will be saved.