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	*Review aspect 1*: Standards and quality management Evaluation and evidence about the management of research degree quality management and enhancement procedures and processes mapped to the associated expectations
C	*Review aspect 2:* The quality and enhancement of the student learning opportunities 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: *Appendix 1:* Student numbers and modes of study, on both PhD and Professional Doctorates, including those at collaborative partners *Appendix 2:* Committee and management structure, indicating frequency of meetings, membership and relationship between committees

> *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 should be by a secure shareable means, with one copy provided on a USB flash-drive. The method of submission is subject to agreement with the Review Manager.

3.3   Evidence within the repository must be labelled with a filename of no more than 6 characters. File names must use only alphanumeric characters (0-9 and a-z) and the dash (-). No punctuation or other marks may be used.

3.4   An index of file names, and full descriptions should be provided in the navigation document cross-referenced to the SRAD where applicable.

3.5   Zipped files; shortcut files types including .lnk or .url; or administrative file types thums.db or DS_store should not be used.

3.6   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.

3.7   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: SRDC 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: SRDC 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. The sample should include:**
	Admission records, including interview record forms
	Offer letter and induction
	Project approval records
	Transfer records
	Records of formal student monitoring
	Evidence of research development training through the NTU Doctorate Plus Programme
	Supervisors, change of supervisor and record of supervision
	Records of transfer from full to part time, or vice versa
	Suspension of study records
	Probation records
	Thesis submission records
	Exam arrangement records
	Candidates declaration records
	Preliminary reports
	Examiners recommendations reports
	External examiner appointment records
	Student handbooks

H: ProfD course information	Folder for each course to include:
	Course specification (current)
	Course structure diagram
	Module specifications
	Course change forms (where applicable)
	External examiner reports and course responses
	Current course and module handbooks
	Example marking grids/matrices
	Moderation arrangements
	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, Doctoral School, SRDC Chairs, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise)
4 months prior	Progress meeting: CADQ, Doctoral School
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, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research & Enterprise), Doctoral School

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

Version:	Approval date:	Implementation date:	Nature of significant revisions:
Sept 2017	01.09.17	01.09.17	New
Sept 2018	12.09.18	01.10.18	Changes to evidence submission requirements and file naming conventions (in line with QHS 7B)
Sept 2019	11.09.19	01.10.19	None
Oct 2019	23.10.19	23.10.19	Change of Supplement number
Sept 2020	16.09.20	01.10.20	None

Equality Analysis

Version:	EA date:	Completed by:
Sept 2017	N/A	