



Ulster University Business School

**PhD Researcher Subject Handbook
(2019/20)**

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ULSTER UNIVERSITY

ULSTER UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL

PhD RESEARCHER HANDBOOK

September 2019

WELCOME

I would just like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Ulster University Business School. I hope you will find your time as a researcher in the Faculty enjoyable and fulfilling.

You will already know who your supervisors are and understand that their primary role is to offer you guidance and support in your studies. Within the Ulster University Business School several other key members of staff are in place to reinforce the support and guidance which you will receive from your supervisors and the Doctoral College. It is hoped that the information in the handbook will be useful and that it will give you an idea of what PhD study is all about and what you can expect during your time as a PhD researcher. If you have any problems or queries you can contact the following key individuals:

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Alternatively, you may contact our administrative support assistant:

Mrs Heather Brown
Room 03G03
Jordanstown Campus
Tel: 028 90368987

NB: Please consult the website for general information:
<http://www.business.ulster.ac.uk/gradresearchcentre/>

Specific guidelines on Ulster University PhD procedures and regulations are available in the Research Studies handbook that can be downloaded from:

<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/doctorscollege/handbooks/research-studies-handbook>

Finally, I would just like to wish you every success in your studies and indeed in the future.

DR MARTIN McCracken - RESEARCH DIRECTOR
ULSTER UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL

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INTRODUCTION

All PhD researchers within the Ulster University Business School can avail of support from the Research Director and Postgraduate Tutor. It is the role of these two individuals to oversee the PhD researcher's progress in terms of their education and training from first application to the University to the final examination.

A key part of the role is to work with Doctoral College staff and facilitate the training and development of PhD researchers, co-ordinate the management and monitoring of their progress, ensure the provision of adequate resources for the researchers' needs and their general welfare, and increase the number of PhD researchers in the UUBS and to develop the UUBS as a centre of excellence in post-graduate research in Ulster University.

Currently there are approximately 50 PhD researchers, enrolled within the Ulster University Business School, two thirds full-time and one-third part-time. All PhD researchers in the Faculty are affiliated to Faculty structures in two ways. They belong to a subject-based Department (E.g. Dept of Management, Leadership and Marketing or Dept of Global Business and Enterprise etc.) and are also closely aligned with the Business and Management Unit of Assessment (formerly known as the Research Institute) in the faculty.

The Research Director and colleagues have an administrative responsibility for all aspects of PhD researcher experience from initial application to final examination. Details of their role, structure, terms of reference, and the processes it oversees are provided in Sections 3-8 of this handbook.

PHD RESEARCHER AFFILIATIONS IN THE FACULTY

All PhD researchers are affiliated to the Faculty in a variety of ways. This affiliation is normally determined by the respective attachment of their first supervisor, and is not negotiable except via changes in the arrangements for supervision.

Subject-Based Departments

The subject-based Departments provide the key structure for the Faculty in terms of teaching and management of staff. All members of academic staff are also members of an appropriate Department, and the Head of Department is their primary line manager. At present the Faculty has four Departments:

- Department of Accounting, Finance and Economics;
- Department of Global Business and Enterprise
- Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management
- Department of Management, Leadership and Marketing

Business and Management - Unit of Assessment

The Business and Management UoA (UoA) is a virtual centre and focal point for research across the Faculty. There are approximately 30 members of academic staff within the Faculty classified as

research active and who are members of the UoA. The Associate Dean of Research - Professor Paul Humphreys and Research Director – Dr Martin McCracken are responsible for the strategic development of research within the UoA.

Considerable emphasis is placed on developing a strong creative and innovative research culture. Research within the faculty complements and reflects government thinking at a regional and national level in terms of supporting an agenda for change within the private and public sector. These features are carried through into three broad sub-disciplines in Operations Management, Marketing and Social Economy.

The UoA has developed collaborative linkages both nationally and internationally through its close relationships with the British Academy of Management, Academy of Marketing, Academy of International Business and a range of professional bodies, such as, CIMA, ACCA, CIPD and ICSA.

PHD RESEARCH SUPPORT - ULSTER UNIVERSITY BUSINESS SCHOOL

Aims and Objectives

To support the development of PhD researchers within the Faculty by:

- improving the quality of research induction and training;
- co-ordinating and structuring the monitoring and management of progress
- providing training in supervision for academic staff
- working to improve resources for PhD researchers and their general welfare,
- increasing the numbers of PhD researchers, and
- developing the Faculty as a centre of excellence in graduate research.

Terms of Reference

To formulate and implement policy for the Faculty in relation to:

- the education and training of PhD researchers including administering procedures and policies related to PhD researcher admission, supervision, report of performance and progress and examination;
- the range of research programmes and qualifications, and means of support for PhD researchers;
- any other matters relating to research degrees and PhD researchers which the UUBS Board may require;
- the admission of PhD researchers, their programmes of study and research and the appointment of supervisors and advisers;
- nominations for the appointment of Boards of Examiners for PhD researchers,
- postgraduate studentships and similar awards.

Structure

The Research Director and Postgraduate Tutor are responsible for all PhD researchers across the current Faculty structures outlined in Section 2. Secretarial support is provided by **Heather Brown** in the Faculty Office on the Jordanstown campus (see contact details above). All matters relating to policy and practice are discussed and agreed by the **Faculty Research Committee**, which reports directly to the Faculty Board and Faculty Executive. This Board meets normally four times per year and has the following membership:

Associate Dean Research and Innovation; Research Director (Chair); Executive Dean of the Ulster University Business School; Heads of Departments within the Faculty; All members of the Business and Management UoA; One full-time postgraduate researcher; One part-time postgraduate researcher.

Policies and Procedures

Details of the University's policies and procedures relating to postgraduate research can be found in the Research Studies Handbook can be downloaded from:

<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/doctorscollege/current-phd-researchers/handbooks-and-policies>

BEING A PhD RESEARCHER

Introduction

Being a PhD researcher is not like being an undergraduate or “taught” postgraduate student. Firstly, PhD researchers are not obliged to go to very many classes. The vast majority of their time is spent on “self-directed” research. That is to say, most of the time they themselves decide what work they are going to do. However, they have a supervisory team made up of members of academic staff with expertise in the area in which they are studying. Their supervisors should provide them with support and guidance in their self-directed efforts.

The roles and responsibilities of both the PhD researcher and the supervisor are highlighted in **Appendices 1 and 2**.

The research process typically includes the following stages:

- Getting started
- Designing and planning the project
- Reviewing the literature
- Collecting data
- Analysing the data
- Writing the thesis
- The examination

Although these are listed as discrete steps, in fact the process is more circular in nature in that you will find yourself at different times revisiting steps you thought you had already completed and rethinking issues, concepts and ideas that you felt you had already addressed satisfactorily. For this reason, studying for a research qualification can at times be very frustrating. At other times, however, it can be exhilarating, particularly at the data collection, analysis and writing up stages.

You also need to be aware that studying for a research degree can also be a somewhat lonely experience. This is because you are perhaps one of the very few people in the world who is immersed in your particular perspective of your topic. It is important therefore that you make full use of the support networks available to you. These networks are discussed throughout this handbook and include: your supervisory team; other PhD Researchers; and research conference networks.

It is important that you have regular contact with your supervisors. The university requires that full time PhD researchers will be in attendance on a daily basis unless there is agreement with their supervisors. It is anticipated that initially you will need to have relatively frequent meetings with your supervisors. However, after a time these meetings may become less frequent until the final writing up stage when you will again need to see your supervisors more regularly. The actual supervisory procedure and systems adopted should be agreed by yourself and your supervisors.

The faculty has a policy that full time PhD researchers should have substantive meetings with their supervisors at least once a month and that part-time PhD researchers at least once in three months. The PhD Manager system allows uploading of digital records of supervisory meetings and I would urge you to use this to ensure that a full record of meetings is held.

PhD researchers are reminded that their first port of call for all matters of concern should be their supervisor, or the Research Director / Postgraduate Tutor. PhD researchers are strongly discouraged from approaching the Doctoral College staff directly. Contact on all matters relating to the Doctoral College is normally handled by the faculty.

Facilities

In conjunction with the subject-based Schools and the UoA, UUBS undertakes to provide its **full-time** PhD researchers with facilities for study. The Faculty has dedicated Postgraduate Research Rooms on three campuses – Coleraine, Jordanstown, and Magee – where full-time researchers have access to desk space, a networked PC and printing facilities.

All researchers obtain an e-mail address when they officially register for PhD study. This will be the address used by the faculty for all correspondence in relation to their research studies. It is the researcher's responsibility to access information provided by the faculty. Any researcher preferring to use a different e-mail address should either set up his or her private e-mail programme to read mail delivered to the University address or visit their University e-mail account regularly.

PhD Researcher Liaison Committee

UUBS has formed a PhD Researcher Liaison committee to discuss matters of researcher concern. There is also researcher representation on the Faculty Research Committee and the Doctoral College Board. The membership of the Researcher Liaison committee is composed of all the PhD researchers, both full time and part time, and the Research Director who acts as the Chair. The remit of the committee is to deal with any general issues impinging on or likely to impinge upon the researchers' studies. The committee meets at least twice a year usually in November and March on all the campuses. Researchers can also contact the Research Director and/or the Postgraduate Tutor at any time by phone or email (details on page 2) if they have any pressing concerns.

Examination Forms

The Doctoral College utilises the PhD Research Manager system to manage most aspects of the PhD researcher journey. However, of the examination process still requires completion of forms (RS11-17; see **Appendix 4**). PhD Manager is used for the authorisation of all aspects of PhD researcher progress such as changes in the initial specification of the research programme, supervision, location, mode of study, or timing. Once submitted within PhD Manager, approval is automatically requested by the supervisor, the Research Director and ultimately the University's Doctoral College Board as appropriate.

Research Ethics

Before you start to carry out your data collection you will need to complete an ethics approval form (RG1A) available from:

<https://internal.ulster.ac.uk/research/office/rofficeeg.php>

Please note that this form must be completed for any study involving human participants (i.e. whether you plan to hold interviews, conduct surveys, focus groups etc.). The process involved in completing the forms is as follows:

1. Completed forms for PhD are reviewed by the researcher's supervisors. On review, if the research to be conducted presents no ethical issues, the supervisor signs the form. At this time the supervisor provides a copy of the Ethics form to the Research Director who sends a copy of the RG1a form to the Chair of the UUBS Research Ethics Committee (Dr Kristel Miller). The PhD Researcher should attach a copy to the final PhD dissertation.
2. Potential ethical issues, along with the RG1 ethics form, are communicated to the Chair of the UBS Ethics committee by the Research Director. Potential ethical issues are considered at a meeting of the UUBS Research Ethics committee.
3. It is critical that the RG1A form should be completed at least two months in advance of your data collection and submitted to the Research Director as soon as it is completed by you and verified by your supervisors. This will allow the faculty to identify any possible ethical issues at an early stage, and to ensure that your data collection phase is not delayed in any way.

MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

The progress of PhD researchers is monitored both at university level by means of separate annual reports completed in PhD Manager by researchers and their supervisors and at faculty level through a programme of research presentations, supported by written reports by the researcher. The purpose of the monitoring is to facilitate the completion of the thesis for the appropriate award within a given time limit.

The time limit for a full time PhD researcher is three years and for an M.Phil researcher two years. For part time researchers they are six years and four years respectively.

Written Reports and Presentations

The faculty will monitor progress through a series of reports written by the PhD researcher and supported by a follow up presentation. These will form part of two major assessments during the first 12 months of study for full-timers and the first 24 months for part-time researchers.

These will be assessed by a panel of research active school staff, who may make recommendations about the direction, organisation or other aspects of the research and will report back to the Research Director and the supervisor on the progress of the researcher to date.

For full time researchers the first assessment, known as the Initial Assessment, will take place not more than four months after the researcher has first registered. For those registering in September, presentations will take place during January. The second assessment, known as the Confirmation Assessment, will take place 9-10 months into the study (June). For part-time researchers the Initial Assessment will occur at least usually 9-10 months after first registration and assessment. For those registering in September this will be in the June period. For those registering at the beginning of January or April this will be in the January period.

Researchers giving oral presentations in January submit their written reports electronically by 4th January. Those presenting in June submit their written reports by 3rd June. Researchers should ensure that sources are referenced correctly and that the reports are free of plagiarism. The written reports will be checked for plagiarism through the Turnitin.

The Nature of the Reports and Presentations

Initial Assessment

In the Initial Assessment the PhD researcher is required to provide a description of the proposed programme of work based on an initial review of the literature and the methodologies available for

carrying out the research. It should be developed in close co-operation with the researcher's supervisor and should include the following information:

- The background to the project
- The overall aim of the research
- Overview of key literatures
- The methodology to be used
- Further work to be completed to develop the PhD.

The written report should be in the form of an abstract (not more than 1000 words long) and the presentation should be between ten and fifteen minutes long (PowerPoint slides are normally used but are not compulsory).

The format of both the Initial Assessment viva and the Confirmation viva will be similar as will the panels. The Initial Assessment viva would normally last 1 hour and the Confirmation Assessment up to 1.5 hours. The format for both will consist of:

- Researcher presentation;
- Questions from the panel on your presentation and the submitted written material;
- Feedback from the panel on your progress.

In both these assessments vivas there will be a chairperson (usually the Research Director or Postgraduate Tutor) and up to two examiners (usually one from within the home Department and one from within another Department of the Faculty). The supervisors will be in attendance but will not answer questions on the researcher's behalf.

After the presentation the members of the panel can ask questions and seek clarification on issues arising from the presentation. This can last for 20 minutes. They may also offer suggestions on how the project may be improved or developed. The purpose of the presentation is not only to monitor the researcher but also to offer advice, support and constructive feedback.

At the Initial Assessment presentation, new PhD researchers may present to their peers. Other new and existing PhD researchers are normally invited to attend presentations (attendance will only be allowed for the presentation and questions part and not for the panel feedback at the end). This is deemed by the Doctoral College as good practice as it helps to develop a strong PhD research community and allows new PhD researchers to gain experience of presenting to peers (which will be helpful preparation, for instance, for future conference presentations).

Confirmation Assessment

The second assessment normally acts as the confirmation procedure from M.Phil to PhD status or as the confirmation of PhD status. The main purpose of the Confirmation viva is to provide assurance that the topic of the PhD is now clearly defined and appropriate, that the scope of the study is appropriate to PhD level (i.e. not more suitable for MPhil or too ambitious and therefore unlikely to be completed in time), that the candidate has developed a suitable methodology that is appropriate to the project and will ensure its successful completion and finally that the outline of the planned progress over the next two years is viable and appropriate.

The panel comments from the Initial Assessment viva will be made available to the Confirmation panel members and consideration will be given to the extent to which those comments have been subsequently addressed.

The written report and oral presentation should include the following:

- The background to the project
- The overall aim of the project
- A literature review to date
- A discussion of the research design including an overview of the methodology to be used and the rationale for adopting it
- A timetable for the completion of the study within the given timeframe (i.e. three years for a full time PhD researcher or six years for part time and two years for a full time M.Phil researcher or three years part time).

The written report for this should be between 5000-10,000 words and the presentation should last around twenty minutes to half an hour and again it is normally accompanied by PowerPoint slides etc. As with the initial assessment presentation those present may ask questions and seek clarification. The panel will normally make recommendations about the direction, organisation and other aspects of the work. It is important that researchers later discuss these comments with their supervisors and consider how the comments may be addressed going forward.

Decisions can range from straightforward confirmation or confirmation with recommendations, to deferral (i.e. repeating the viva within a month or two) to recommendations of transferring to an MPhil or withdrawing from the programme. So again, this is an indication of the seriousness with which the Confirmation assessment should be approached. You will be given oral feedback after the viva and written feedback within a few days following the viva.

The panels at both the Initial and Confirmation Assessment presentations are required to submit a formal written report to the Research Director on the researchers' progress to date and their suitability for transferring/confirmation as PhD researchers. This report is then considered by Research Director and the Associate Dean for Research and impact in the UUBS before the researcher is formally transferred/confirmed.

As preparation for the viva, in addition to these guidelines, it is recommended the candidate and the supervisor study the requirements for each assessment as outlined on the PhD manager system as these provide useful information about what the examiners are looking for and should therefore guide the candidate in preparing the presentation and the paperwork for their submission.

Please remember that researchers giving oral presentations for these two assessment events are required to submit their written reports through the PhD Manager system at least four weeks in advance of the meeting date. If, for any reason, a researcher cannot meet the deadlines set or give their presentation as arranged they must let their supervisor and the Research Director know immediately.

Monitoring Post Confirmation

Researchers who successfully complete their second assessment (confirmation of PhD) are required to provide evidence of progress in the years following the second assessment. Progress may be demonstrated in a number of ways:

- A 2000 word report; or
- A presentation within their Department or the Faculty (e.g. a presentation at the annual PhD research day); or
- A conference paper presentation; or
- A journal article submission.

One of the above pieces of evidence should be selected and the details provided to the Research Director by **31 May** of each subsequent year for which they are registered, following the Confirmation Assessment. If a written report is chosen, the report should be no more than 2000

words long and should include:

- the aims and objectives of the project
- progress to date
- any issues or problems that may affect the completion of the project
- expected date of completion of the project.

Submission of one of the above report items is imperative as it allows the faculty to monitor your progress and to liaise with your supervisors and Doctoral College to provide support/advice as required.

Supervisor Meetings

In addition to the key processes outlined above, the faculty monitors researcher and supervisor performance through PhD Manager where minutes of meetings may be uploaded and shared between the PhD researcher and supervisors. It is the responsibility of the PhD Researcher to record the initial minutes as comprehensively as possible, as they are important as a record of the amount of supervision a researcher has received, and offer a way of signalling problems at an early stage, thus helping the faculty to improve its provision for both researchers and supervisors.

Annual Reports

By the first week in May each year, researchers and supervisors are required to report formally on progress during the year, again within PhD Manager. These reports are reviewed at the annual Postgraduate Progress Board, which is part of the Faculty's examination schedule in June, and decisions with regard to any necessary action are made at that point. The Board determines whether a researcher should be allowed to proceed. **Any researcher for whom the necessary reports are not available to the Board may not be allowed to register for the next academic year.**

Submitting the Thesis and Final Examination

Researchers normally submit their thesis for examination after three years of full-time research or six years of part-time research. The final examination takes the form of a viva voce and is normally held within three months of the date the thesis is submitted. The viva voce consists of three panel members – a Chair (normally the Research Director or AD Research and Impact), an External Examiner from another university and an internal panel member (a member of academic staff from the Ulster University Business School). It should be noted that a member of the supervisory team may also attend but that they are not permitted to speak during the formal viva proceedings. The criteria for examining research theses are outlined on the Doctoral College website:

<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/doctoralcollege/current-phd-researchers/handbooks-and-policies/examiners-handbook> .

Researchers are required to complete an RS11 Notice of Intention to Submit form to the Doctoral College three months prior to the intended submission date. It should be noted that these functions are not yet available on the PhD Manager system.

It is recommended as good practice that all researchers undertake a mock viva before the actual viva itself. Researchers should consult with their supervisors to make the arrangements for the mock viva.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Researcher Development Programme

The Doctoral College at Ulster University wants to ensure that all PhD researchers receive the highest quality of research education and training and therefore the Researcher Development Programme (RDP) at Ulster is an integral part of your doctoral programme. The RDP is a suite of workshops, specialist skills sessions, online training and personal development planning activities designed for you to gain the experience and skills required to be a competent and professional independent researcher. The sessions are delivered through both the Doctoral College and individual Faculties, by academics and external facilitators committed to delivering excellence in supporting postgraduate research.

Researcher development courses include training (both online and face to face) which covers technical elements, specific to the individual and their project as well as their personal and professional development requirements. The development opportunities are available at both Doctoral College level and at Faculty and discipline specific level. The Doctoral College is committed to delivering a programme that is high quality, flexible and responsive to the needs of our PhD researchers.

The Doctoral College also encourages PhD researchers to establish their own 'PhD researcher-led initiatives'. Details of funding opportunities for such initiatives will be made available to you later in the first semester.

Details of courses are available on the Researcher Development Programme portal:

www.ulster.ac.uk/researcherdevelopment

All PhD researchers are expected to undertake a Training Needs Analysis at the beginning of their studies and to review this on an annual basis, in consultation with their supervisor(s). The Training Needs Analysis is structured around the Vitae Researcher Development Framework 'domains'. This will be used to develop your own Personal Development Plan which will map onto the offerings within the RDP. Ideally your plans should be individualised according to your own needs and requirements, whatever stage you are at in your doctoral study. The templates are on the Researcher Development Portal.

Courses and workshops can be viewed by 'Domain (area)' by 'Year', by 'Date' in the forthcoming workshops section in the Portal – and the programme listing is fully searchable.

However, if you are unsure of where to start, there are particular sessions that could be 'recommended' for Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3. These recommendations are by way of guidance and you should explore all the courses on offer and agree your Personal Development Plan with your supervisors.

Getting Started

1. Assess your current skills against the Researcher Development Framework using the [facility](#) on PhD manager (you need to be logged on to use this facility) regarding researcher development planning. You should carry this out at the beginning of your doctoral study, and liaise with your supervisor(s) while doing this.
2. Where you recognise gaps in your skills, or areas where your skills could be improved, identify which workshops and online training would best address these gaps. Summary descriptions of the workshops, and online training, are available on the Researcher Development Portal. There will be additional Faculty level, and discipline specific training available from which to choose. The programme of workshops, online training and events

you choose and plan out becomes your own [Personal Development Plan](#). (you need to be logged on to use this facility) You should aim to have completed your initial plan for Year 1 before your 100 Day Viva.

3. Book the relevant courses online within PhD Manager - course offerings will be updated throughout the year and you will receive email notifications of such additions, and the Portal will be continually updated.
4. Ensure that you sign in at the workshop so that your attendance can be recorded and automatically updated to your records.
5. You will receive an email inviting you to complete an online feedback questionnaire when your attendance has been recorded. This is anonymous and will be used to provide essential information on the quality of the workshops provided.
6. On an annual basis, revisit your Personal Development Plan and Training Needs Analysis to ensure that they remain relevant.

Further details are available in the Researcher Development Handbook available on the Doctoral College website.

Teaching and Learning Development

The following courses are organised by Staff Development to support post-graduate researchers in their part-time teaching roles:

Introduction to Teaching and Learning for Post-graduate Tutors and Demonstrators (a half-day session compulsory for all who teach in the Ulster University)

For further information go to:

<http://staffdev.ulster.ac.uk/index.php?/courses>

First Steps to Supporting Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (an accredited course leading to Associate Status of the Higher Education Academy)

Library Support

All new PhD researchers will be invited to attend a Library induction session at their campus of study. This session will provide an important source of information on the Library resources (such as online databases, search engines, reports and company data) that will provide key secondary sources for research. Library staff also provide training on Refworks, which is an important tool for collating and organizing reference lists.

Formal Research Skills and Methods Classes

The Ulster University Business School offers a number of research-based modules (Research Skills and Research Methods), mostly in the second semester for a range of Postgraduate MSc Programmes. All new PhD researchers may attend these sessions and you should seek advice from your supervisors as to the benefits of attending them. Again, these modules will be assessed by coursework and it is up to the supervisor to advise the researcher whether to do the assessment or not.

Faculty Level PhD Seminars and Workshops

The faculty will organise and co-ordinate specific training in selected areas during the year. This will include invited guest speakers on PhD research and methodologies, for instance:

- Critical Literature Review;
- Getting Published;
- Understanding and Getting Organised for Academic Research.

A PhD research day will be held in early February, consisting of guest speakers and researcher presentations. An evening social event for PhD researchers will be held in late June. Further details and dates for these and other events where external and internal UUBS staff present their research will be circulated during the year.

The University's Student Services

The University's Student Support offers researchers a number of services including accommodation, health care, and guidance and support on a number of issues. Professional counsellors can offer advice and support in the following ways: individual counselling, information about and sources of help for personal problems, personal development groups, advice on examination stress, understanding depression, and settling into university. There is also a specifically designated Educational Guidance section which offers educational advice, guidance and support to allow researchers to reach their full potential. Information about Student Support services can be found by logging on to the University's home page and clicking on the appropriate links.

Fellow PhD Researchers

Finally, because of the individualistic nature of the work of being a PhD researcher a very important part of the researcher's support network is other researchers who have encountered the same types of problems you are likely to face. You will be sharing an office with other PhD researchers and this will help to provide some exchange of ideas and experiences, especially from researchers who are at a later stage of their PhD. Also, be sure to visit the Doc at your campus, where you will be able to meet with researchers from other faculties.

Conferences

As part of your development as a PhD researcher it is hoped that during your period as a researcher you will present at least one paper at an appropriate conference, agreed upon by you and your supervisors. Provision for helping with the costs of attending a conference exists within the funding arrangement for researchers supported by the Department for Economy and the VCRS award. For those not receiving this type of funding the faculty may be able to offer support (depending on the availability of funding at the time). Researchers should approach their supervisors about this and how it might be accessed when they are considering putting together a paper for a conference.

Publishing Papers

Although there may not always be funding available for researchers wishing to present a paper at a conference the faculty strongly encourages researchers, in conjunction with their supervisors, to write up significant findings from their research for publication in a refereed academic journal.

Issues around authorship and publishing should be discussed between PhD researchers and their supervisors early in the PhD so that both researcher and supervisor are clear about arrangements. It is normally the case that the PhD researcher is named as a lead author on work from their PhD with their supervisors named as co-authors. Any additional named authors on PhD work, outside of the supervisory team, would be in exceptional circumstances and this should be discussed and agreed between PhD researchers and their supervisors at an early stage, to avoid possible disputes arising.

Teaching Opportunities

It is beneficial from a career development point of view for PhD researchers to obtain some teaching experience during their period of study.

The opportunities for teaching will depend to a great extent on the teaching needs within a Department at any given time and PhD researchers' area of expertise. All PhD researchers will be asked to record their areas of teaching interest with the Research Director and these details will be forwarded to Heads of Departments for consideration, should any teaching opportunities arise.

Please note:

- Teaching allocations are at the discretion of Heads of Department and not the Research Director.
- Full-time funded PhD researchers may only teach a maximum of 6 hours per week.
- Teaching would involve mostly seminars and to a lesser extent lecturing.
- Where PhD researchers have been offered teaching, it would be expected that they are provided with teaching support materials where possible.

IMPORTANT HOUSEKEEPING

Research Funds

All DfE-funded and VCRS PhD researchers are awarded a budget each year to be spent on activities or equipment to support their research (for instance a training event, attending a conference, collecting data). This sum may vary from year to year but is projected to be around £900 in 2019/20.

Prior approval for all DEL/VCRS expenditure must be obtained from the Research Director. The following steps must be followed:

- As early as possible in advance of a trip or the date of expenditure (at least 3 weeks beforehand), a **prior approval** form must be sent to the Heather Brown to allow for signatures and processing.
- This form must be accompanied by a letter or email of endorsement from their supervisors justifying the expenditure and pointing out its relevance to the researcher's research project.
- 2-3 weeks following submission of the prior approval form, PhD researchers should contact the Finance Department for a prior approval number. This number will be needed to make travel arrangements (see below), to prepay conference registration fees and to claim back expenses following the trip.
- Following trips, a travel and subsistence expenses form, for expenses incurred, should be submitted to the faculty secretary (Heather Brown). Please note: all claims for expenditure must be accompanied by original receipts. Photocopies of receipts or credit card slips would not be accepted as proof of expenditure.

Copies of the prior approval, travel expenses and subsistence, and mileage claim forms can be downloaded from: http://www.ulster.ac.uk/finance/finance_forms.html

Please note: claims for expenditure will only be processed if a prior approval form has been submitted in advance of the trip (and a prior approval number has been received) and if original receipts for expenditure are attached to the claim form.

Researchers funded from other sources may seek funding, though there is no guarantee that the request will be met. In this case, prior approval for all such expenditure must be obtained from the Research Director and/or Head of Department.

Types of Expenditure

Air travel must always be booked using the University's approved travel agent – Key Travel. Key Travel may be contacted at tel. no. 08451220106. Before booking, Key Travel will require a prior approval number and a cost centre code (you must contact the secretary for the cost centre code). For low cost airline travel (e.g. Easyjet, Ryanair etc.), Key Travel will require this to be booked via their website – please provide your trip details to Heather Brown who will advise on online booking issues.

Conference fees may be paid in advance to the conference organisers through the University Finance Department. Please provide a copy of the conference registration form and payment details, along with your prior approval number, to the Finance Department.

Car mileage for research trips may be claimed using the car mileage claim form (see Appendix 6).

Accommodation expenses are normally reimbursed after the trip, though it may be possible to book hotel accommodation in advance of a trip through the University's travel agent (Key Travel).

Please note:

- It is expected that the most economical forms of travel should be used whenever possible (e.g. public transport rather than taxis).
- Claim forms for expenses must be submitted within 2 months of the date of the trip.

Leave of Absence

The University expects full-time PhD researchers to attend on a daily basis at the campus where their first supervisor is located. Any alternative arrangements need to be recorded in writing, and, where they involve regular and/or prolonged absence, may require the approval of the Faculty and Doctoral College. Applications for a period of study involving more than three months away from the University may be made using PhD Manager. There may be occasions when, for health, family or other reasons, a researcher may wish to interrupt his or her research studies for a period of time. In these situations, and only then, an application for formal "Leave of Absence" should be made using the PhD Manager Change request. Leave of absence cannot be requested near the end of the period of official registration (especially when the leave of absence sought is longer than the amount of time left to complete the three-year registration process). Leave cannot be sought after the official three-year period is over.

Full-time PhD researchers are entitled to 40 days annual leave. This is part of your work year. You should consult your supervisor(s) if you are planning to be away for more than three days. There are times during the year when it is not appropriate to take leave, and your supervisor(s) will be able to advise you accordingly. You should also let them know where you will be during your absence

Time Extensions

If you do not complete your thesis in the time limit set by the University – that is, three years for full time researchers and six years for part time researchers you may be granted an extension. This is initially for four months and is **free of charge**. The application is made through PhD Manager. If required you may normally be granted another three months extension for full time researchers or six months for part time researchers if required. The fee for this second extension has been set at £260 (this figure may change from year to year). If an extension of time is required because of

circumstances beyond your control for example illness or equipment failure, you can apply for a fee waiver in PhD Manager and this will be considered by the Head of Doctoral College, who approves all requests for extensions of time and fee waivers.

EXAMINATION ARRANGEMENTS

Once a date can be identified by which the thesis is deemed ready for examination, the following arrangements need to be made:

1. The researcher submits an RS11 Notice of Intention to Submit form to the Doctoral College three months prior to the intended submission date.
2. The Doctoral College forwards a copy of the RS11 to the supervisors with a copy of the RS12 Appointment of Examiners requesting that the examiners should be appointed as soon as possible.
3. The supervisor(s) take steps to appoint appropriate external and internal examiners and a Chairman for the viva. Names of those to be involved in the viva are indicated on the RS12.
4. The completed RS12, signed by the Research Director, is returned to the Doctoral College. A CV must be attached to the RS12 for each external examiner and should refer to his/her previous experience of examining at research degree level.
5. These appointments will be considered for approval by the Head of Doctoral College.
6. The Doctoral College will write to the examiners formally, offering the external examiner the appointment and asking him or her to confirm acceptance.
7. Upon receipt of the thesis, it will be sent by the Doctoral College to the examiners and the supervisor. The thesis will be accompanied by preliminary report forms to be completed by the examiners and supervisor(s) and a letter stating that the supervisor will be in contact with the examiners in due course to establish a date and time for the examination.
8. The supervisor should contact the examiners to agree a date, time and venue for the viva.
9. Once a date is agreed by the examiners and the supervisor, the supervisor should contact the Doctoral College to confirm the date. The Doctoral College will send out a letter of confirmation and will arrange a room for the viva and accommodation for the external examiner.
10. It is expected that the examiners and supervisor will return their completed preliminary report forms to the Doctoral College one week before the examination except where extenuating circumstances apply.
11. The Doctoral College will provide an examination pack for the Chairman of the examiners consisting of copies of the preliminary reports, regulations, appropriate notes of guidance for examiners and the Chairman and a RS13b or RS14b Recommendation of Examiners form to be completed and signed by the examiners and the Chairman at the conclusion of the viva and BEFORE the examiners have left the University.

12. The Recommendation of Examiners form must be returned to the Doctoral College immediately after the viva and must explicitly state the outcome of the examination, which in turn must explicitly reflect the provisions of the regulations. The form must be accompanied by notification of any minor amendments or revisions that are required to be made by the candidate. These should be agreed by the examiners and should be presented in such a way that they can be forwarded to the candidate (note: minor amendments should take no longer than three months to complete and should need to be checked by the internal examiner only; substantive changes requiring longer than three months and which may require to be re-examined – with or without a second viva. The examiners may wish to indicate the outcome of the examination to the candidate but should consider stating that this is subject to confirmation by Doctoral College.

13. The recommendation of Examiners form will be forwarded by the Doctoral College to the Chairman of the Doctoral College Board for consideration and approval. When this approval has been received, the Doctoral College will write to the candidate confirming the outcome of the examination (the Doctoral College will attempt to address any queries raised by the Chairman of the Doctoral College Board with the Chairman of the examiners as quickly as possible).

14. A copy of the approved Recommendation and the comments of the Chairman of the Doctoral College Board and the letter to the candidate will be forwarded to the Research Director for any appropriate follow-up action or monitoring.

Please note this information is given here for guidance. The University's Regulations are in the process of being amended. You should check the Doctoral College website for the latest version. The faculty will periodically advise you of any substantive changes that may affect you. It is therefore important that you use your University e-mail account and keep the Research Director / Postgraduate Tutor informed of any change of postal address.