

## **Procedures for the Review of Decisions Regarding Faculty Interim Assessments and inadequate progress**

Candidates for the Degrees of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Philosophy

1. Following interim assessment or a report of inadequate progress by the Research Director, a candidate whose studies have been discontinued or who is asked to register for a lesser degree by the Board of the Faculty may ask for his/her case to be reviewed. This may be:
  - a. a decision made as a result of a formal Initial, Confirmation or Final Assessment;
  - b. a decision made at an Annual Progress Review Board, or
  - c. a decision made as a result of a supervisor request in the light of sustained unsatisfactory progress.

2. No review will be allowed on grounds of undisclosed personal difficulties prior to submission.

### 3. Grounds for Review

Eligible grounds are:

- a) circumstances after submission affecting the PhD researcher's performance of which the Board of Examiners or supervisors were not aware when the recommendation was made;
- b) procedural irregularities in the conduct of an assessment, or
- c) evidence of prejudice or bias or of inadequate assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners (or supervisors in the case of inadequate progress).

### 4. Request for Review

A PhD researcher who wishes his/her case to be reviewed shall lodge a written statement with the Research Director within one month of the date of the formal notification from the Doctoral College Board.

The Associate Dean for Research and Impact (ADRI) (or appropriate nominee), in consultation with the Research Director will give initial consideration to all appropriate requests for review submitted in accordance with sections 1 to 3 above. Where it is determined that the review is being sought on the basis of procedural irregularity in the conduct of the assessment and there is clear evidence to indicate that such an irregularity did occur, the ADRI may recommend that a new assessment be conducted in accordance with the appropriate regulations. Replacement assessors may be appointed if it is determined that the original assessors have not acted in accordance with the Regulations.

In all other cases, the request will be referred to the Faculty Committee for Research Degree Appeals, which is constituted as follows: Board of Faculty nominee in addition to the ADRI (the Board, shall appoint at least biennially a

panel of senior academic staff with supervisory experience from amongst whom a nominee will be selected); Research Director. The ADRI shall act as Chair.

## 5. Review Process

The Faculty shall give the PhD researcher ten days' notice in writing of the meeting of the Faculty Committee for Research Degrees Appeals and shall inform him/her that he/she has a right to present his/her case in person and to be accompanied by a member of Ulster University of his/her choice. The Faculty Committee for Research Degrees Appeals shall consider the request for review presented in writing by the PhD researcher together with a background report on the case prepared by the Research Director.

Reports from the assessors or the Board of the Faculty or the supervisors as appropriate shall be made available to the Committee where this is necessary for the proper consideration of the review. In addition, the assessors or supervisors shall be informed that a review of the decision has been requested; they shall be invited to submit comments to the Committee in a form that can be made available to the PhD researcher and shall be informed that, where such comments are not submitted, the PhD researcher shall be given an unattributed summary of the main points of the report.

## 6. Recommendation

The Committee having considered the evidence and taken such advice as may be necessary shall:

- a. re-affirm the original decision of the assessors or the supervisors;
- b. recommend to the assessors or the Board of the Faculty as appropriate that, for reasons stated the decision should be reviewed;
- c. give the PhD researcher permission to revise the report and re-submit for re-examination within a specified time limit;
- d. where the review is a result of a supervisor report of inadequate progress, provide a specified period of additional supervision to allow the PhD researcher to demonstrate adequate progress, or
- e. declare the assessment null and void and direct that a fresh assessment be conducted.

The Faculty Committee for Research Degrees Appeals shall inform the PhD researcher of the recommendation and make a formal record of the discussions and recommendations of the Review meeting and report this to the Doctoral College Board.