

## **Framework for Distance Research Study**

Ulster University welcomes applications from non-UK residents wishing to register for study leading to the award of a PhD on a 'distance' basis.

Research activities at the University are organised within various Units of Assessment. An Ulster University supervisor(s) will be appointed for all distance PhD students. Supervision will normally only be approved by the University for those projects where there is existing research expertise at the University. In addition, an external supervisor(s) for the research study will be required at the home institution hosting the PhD student\*. Ulster University Doctoral College approves the appointment of External Supervisors in line with agreed guidelines. In light of these requirements, it is advisable for those considering this mode of study to have informal discussions with the potential Ulster University and external supervisor(s) before submitting their application.

\*Students in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences may in certain circumstances be exempt from the requirement to have a supervisor in their country of study. In order for such an exemption to be approved by the Faculty Research Committee, Ulster University supervisor(s) must first agree with the student a schedule of supervision contact, which must include a combination of written and face-to-face elements, and should make use where appropriate of electronic (internet, video) communication facilities. The schedule must be comparable in terms of substance and frequency of contact with what would normally be expected by for students in attendance at Ulster University. Students who are not required to have an external supervisor in their country of study must undertake to participate in the Researcher Development programme and to make themselves available for the confirmation viva (within 24 months) during the period that they are required to be on campus at Ulster University.

### **Application, Admission and Fees**

For admission to PhD, applicants should have a first or upper second class honours degree in a subject area related to the proposed research study and a recognised English language qualification of Ulster admissions standard, e.g. IELTS score of 6.0, with a minimum of 5.5 in each component. Applicants should apply through the online application system and should indicate that they wish to be considered for registration as a distance research student, and give details of the institution or organisation in their vicinity where the proposed external supervisor will be located. A statement from the proposed external supervisor on suitable headed paper should be included with the application form, indicating willingness to act in the capacity of external supervisor and also verifying that the expectations are clear and the necessary resources are available at the proposed site of distance study to support the PhD project work.

The fee for this mode of study is £7840 per annum for the 2017/2018 academic year. All fees are subject to annual review by the University. It is possible to pay the annual fee in two instalments and the first instalment must be paid at the time of registration.

Applications may be received and considered at any stage of the year.

### **Registration and Progress**

Successful applicants will be registered part-time for the programme of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) by distance study and will be subject to the University's regulations for PhD. These are provided to all new research students and are available online.

The period of study for a part-time PhD is six years.

Research students at the University are required to undertake a Researcher Development Programme. The outcome of this training will be assessed at the Confirmation of Registration stage of study. It is intended that in the future details of the learning objectives and indicated learning resources for this Researcher Development Programme will be provided to all distance research students soon after registration.

Between twelve and twenty-four months of study, PhD students are required to write a report on their progress to date and a plan for their future research, and to make a presentation, against which assessment by a panel of research active staff will be made. Further details of this confirmation of registration can be found in the regulations. In the case of distance PhD students this may be undertaken by video conferencing.

The annual report form (forms RS3 and RS4) will be completed by the student and supervisors during April of each year and considered by the Research Director, with action being taken as necessary on any matters of concern.

It is required that distance PhD students seek to spend at least one period of six weeks undertaking research study at Ulster University.

### **Examination**

Examination procedures are as authorised in the regulations. The thesis will be submitted through the Doctoral College and dispatched to members of the Board of Examiners. The oral examination will normally be held at one of the campuses of Ulster University.

### **Communication with Supervisors and the University**

PhD students are required to have regular meetings with their supervisors to discuss their research progress. Action points from substantive meetings should be recorded and copies maintained by the supervisors, student and relevant Research Director at Ulster University.

PhD students may communicate with the University through their research supervisor(s) based at the University, the Research Director or via the Doctoral College and will at various stages of their programme of study receive correspondence from each of these, to which they will be required to respond as indicated.

### **Student Complaints and Appeals**

Registered students of Ulster University may also avail of the student complaints procedure. There is also an appeals procedure, which the student may invoke in the event of either: a recommendation from the Doctoral College Board that the student should withdraw due to lack of academic progress; or a recommendation from a Board of Examiners that the student should not be awarded the degree for which they are enrolled.