



University of
St Andrews

Registration and induction of postgraduate research students

Document type	Policy
Scope (applies to)	PGR only
Applicability date	31/05/2016
Review date	31/07/2027
Approved date	16/08/2023
Approver	Senate Policies
Document owner	Deputy Head of Education Policy and Quality
School / unit	Education and Student Experience
Document status	Published
Information classification	Public
Equality impact assessment	None
Key terms	Academic policies/Student progression/PGR Registration and induction
Purpose	Policy on the registration and induction of postgraduate research students. Includes policy on co-tutelle agreements and changes to mode of study.

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.3	Minimum period of registration required for a St Andrews degree clarified.	Updated	Emily Feamster, Deputy Head of Education Policy and Quality	16/08/2023

1. Registration and matriculation

No student can be registered for a postgraduate degree without submitting a formal application, and receiving a formal letter of acceptance. Students who have been accepted for admission to a postgraduate programme are required to matriculate at the commencement of their studies and each year thereafter on the anniversary of their first matriculation date until the requirements for the award of their degree have been fulfilled, or their studies discontinued.

Postgraduate students must complete online matriculation each year regardless of whether they are in, or away from, St Andrews. Where a student is away from St Andrews for academic reasons and unable to matriculate online, it is the responsibility of the student and the school to make alternative arrangements with Registry (see also the [Location of Studies](#) policy). To become a fully registered student, students must complete the matriculation agreement as part of the online matriculation process. The matriculation agreement is the electronically signed contract between the student and the University, which mutually binds both parties to abide by the University's rules and regulations.

Where a supervisor joins the staff of the University of St Andrews, the Associate Provost Students shall have the power to admit the PhD students of that member of staff to the University, accrediting the research performed by that student in the previous institution. The student will be able to graduate with a PhD from the University of St Andrews if the period of full registration at St Andrews is equal to or exceeds 50% of the prescribed study period.

1.1 Fees

The [schedule of fees](#) can be found on the University website. Fees are payable on initial registration and at the beginning of each academic year or semester thereafter. All fees are subject to annual revision, and the revised fees will apply to all students. Failure to pay fees on matriculation may lead to discontinuation of studies.

1.2 Periods of study

Please see the policy on [Length of Study and Associated Fees for Postgraduate Research Students](#).

1.3 Co-Tutelle (Joint PhD Programmes)

The University may collaborate with other universities to register postgraduate research students under a co-tutelle (joint degree) agreement when this is strategically justified. This agreement facilitates joint supervision and for awards to

be formally recognised. A co-tutelle arrangement should only be proposed when all parties involved are confident that the partner institutions share appropriately high academic standards and quality assurance.

A formal co-tutelle agreement must be in place before the student matriculates for the first time. The rules that govern a co-tutelle or joint PhD programme (in terms of selection, admission, supervision, progress and review arrangements, training, assessment, etc.) must be negotiated between the institutions prior to signing the co-tutelle agreement, so that the minimum requirements of both can be met.

Where St Andrews is the lead institution our internal postgraduate research policies and procedures should be followed. Any exceptions to normal University policies may be approved by the Provost, but only where there is good reason and there are assurances that the standard of the PhD and the quality of the student experience will not be compromised.

Where St Andrews is not the lead institution, the following minimum progression and examination arrangements must be met:

- Every research student will undergo a progress review at least once in each year of registration. The institution at which the research student is currently hosted will undertake the review, but the Lead Institution will have overall responsibility for the process. When necessary, the School postgraduate committee will request a copy of the research student's reports from the partner during the academic year to allow for monitoring to take place. The requirements, timing, style, assessment criteria and potential outcomes of the progress review must be made clear to research students from the beginning of their co-tutelle programme (see also [Progress Reviews and Termination of Studies for Postgraduate Research Students](#)).
- If, due to the requirements of the partner institution, the thesis is presented in a language other than English, the student will be required to provide a summary in English as outlined in the [Postgraduate Research Senate Regulations](#) (PGR Regulation 16) at the time of submission.
- Examination requirements must be agreed at the point of the co-tutelle proposal. The examining committee should always include at least one internal examiner from St Andrews and one external examiner (i.e. external to both institutions). The external examiner should be agreed by both institutions.
- Every student must complete an oral examination. The preference is to have a viva at St Andrews or a similar oral examination organised by the partner institution. Where a viva is not the norm at the partner institution, a compromise arrangement should be agreed at the time of proposal, eg thesis examination by committee followed by a public defence.

Students in receipt of funding from a Scottish Graduate School may have a supervision team drawn from multiple Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) but this

does not constitute a co-tutelle. These arrangements should be made at the time of application following the Scottish Graduate School guidelines.

For additional information about co-tutelle degrees, please contact the Global Office at collabs@st-andrews.ac.uk.

2. Changes to terms and conditions of study

The University believes that the periods allowed under the regulations are sufficient in most circumstances for students to complete their degrees or programmes.

Research students and supervisors should be aware that some research councils impose heavy penalties on schools where theses are submitted late.

There is a distinction between an extension and a leave of absence. Students who are within their prescribed period of study can obtain leave of absence for personal reasons. A student who applies for leave of absence must be unable to work on the thesis for a significant period of time. On the other hand, extensions are appropriate after completion of the prescribed period of study where thesis completion has been delayed due to unforeseen difficulties. For additional information on leave of absence, please see the [Leave of Absence, Re-engagement, and Withdrawal](#).

Written applications for leave of absence or extension are normally made to the Associate Provost Students by the student but may be made by a principal supervisor or programme coordinator on behalf of a student in exceptional circumstances where, for example, a student is physically or mentally incapable of doing so.

The University currently expects all PhD degrees should be completed within four years for full-time students, or eight years for part-time students. These periods exclude any leave of absence granted by the Associate Provost Students, and may be altered in line with specific research council guidelines. Records of submission rates will be reviewed annually by the Associate Provost Education and the Academic Monitoring Group.

2.1 Extension of time limit

If a thesis is not submitted within the time limit an extension may, in exceptional circumstances, be granted by the Associate Provost Students. For additional information on extension please see the policy on [Length of Study and Associated Fees for Postgraduate Research Students](#).

Students who matriculated for the first time before 1 January 2017 and did not opt in to the updated policy should consult [Length of Study for Postgraduate Research Students](#).

2.2 Withdrawal from a programme

A student wishing to withdraw from a postgraduate programme should write to the Associate Provost Students, stating the effective date of withdrawal. Before formally withdrawing, students are advised to discuss the implications of withdrawal with their supervisor or programme coordinator and with the Associate Provost Students. The supervisor or programme coordinator should confirm the date of withdrawal. Students are also advised to discuss the financial implications with Registry.

Registry will send a notice stating the date of withdrawal. In the case of students sponsored by UK research councils or similar bodies, this date should be adhered to in correspondence with the research councils or other bodies. In such cases the principal supervisor is also responsible for ensuring that the sponsor has been informed of the withdrawal.

Students may be withdrawn from a programme of study if all contact has been lost with the student for a period of over one month.

Candidates who allow their registration to lapse without having obtained leave of absence and who subsequently apply for reinstatement will be reinstated only with the approval of the Associate Provost Students following a positive recommendation from the relevant Head of School. If a reinstatement is granted, a student will be required to pay the appropriate fee for the period of renewal (e.g. full-time, part-time tuition fee, continuation fee, extension fee, etc).

For overseas students there may be visa implications if a student withdraws from their studies at the University. If a student is no longer registered at the University, the University can no longer sponsor them to remain in the UK. Students should ensure that they take advice on their particular situation (see [Visas](#)).

2.3 Termination of studies

If serious problems regarding a student's progress are identified, it may prove necessary to discontinue the student's studies or register them for a lower degree. Often concerns leading to termination of study proceedings will come to light through the annual progress review. For further information please consult the policy on [Progress Reviews and Termination of Studies for Postgraduate Research Students](#).

For overseas students there may be visa implications if studies have been terminated. If a student is no longer registered at the University, the University can no longer sponsor them to remain in the UK. Students should take advice on their particular situation (see [Visas](#)).

Version number	Purpose / changes	Document status	Author of changes, role and school / unit	Date
1.0	Converting policy previously held on a webpage to a stand-alone document.		Emily Feamster, Academic Policy Officer, Principal's Office	21/06/2019
1.1	Updates to support cross-institutional supervisory arrangements for Scottish Graduate School funded studentships.		Emily Feamster, Academic Policy Officer, Principal's Office	21/06/2019
1.2	Changes to Associate Provost titles	Updated	Emily Feamster, Academic Policy Officer, Principals Office	02/08/2021
1.3	Minimum period of registration required for a St Andrews degree clarified.	Updated	Emily Feamster, Deputy Head of Education Policy and Quality	16/08/2023