University Procedures for the Approval of External Research Degree Candidature

1. Introduction

The University of Kent has established procedures for the admission, supervision and examination of candidates who are unable to attend the University regularly for supervisory meetings whilst undertaking research for the degree of Masters or PhD (i.e. an existing approved research programme of study leading to an award of the University). Such candidates may be based overseas or in the UK. Through these arrangements candidates who are unable to be in attendance at the University campus for the complete period of their registration are provided with supervision under the guidance of a Supervisory Team based at the University of Kent.\(^1\)

Applicants must meet the same entry requirements as those research students who are residents of the University of Kent and must also satisfy the University that they are able to undertake a suitable research project in their home country.

The attached form must be completed and approved for each external research student admitted to the University of Kent.

Arrangements to admit cohorts of students from a partner organisation may not be approved via these means but must be considered via the procedures for approving collaborative provision.

2. Admission

A candidate may be permitted to register as an external research student when the following conditions are fulfilled:

a. The candidate meets the normal requirements for admission to the degree concerned including the following:

i. The candidate holds a UK second class honours degree or better (or equivalent qualification/experience).

ii. The candidate meets the University's criteria for competence in English.

iii. The candidate's references are of appropriate quality.

iv. The research proposal/proposed area of research is of an appropriate standard and falls within the scope of the programme for which the candidate has applied.

b. The University has determined that: (i) the candidate’s reasons for wishing to register as an external candidate are acceptable and (ii) the candidate is situated in an appropriate research environment with ready access to all the facilities required for the proposed programme of training and research (e.g. libraries, laboratories, internet access, access to training in research methodologies and transferable skills, approved local supervisor etc.) and (iii) that the candidate has the means for rapid audio-visual communication with his/her main supervisor, supervisory team and School (e.g. telephone, fax, email, SKYPE, video/telephone conferencing).

\(^1\) Please note that some postgraduate research degrees cannot be delivered on an external basis and other external research degrees may require a candidate to come to Kent to attend compulsory training courses. Candidates should contact the school to investigate specific requirements in advance of making an application.
c. The main supervisor and other members of the supervisory team have confirmed that they are willing and available to supervise the candidate externally. This arrangement must be confirmed by the School Director of Graduate Studies.

d. The arrangements for the external research candidature have been approved by the relevant Head of Academic School, Faculty and the Dean of the Graduate School. These arrangements will be detailed in a form completed by the candidate and school (see Appendix 1) and signed by all relevant parties.

3. **Supervision**

The candidate will be assigned a main supervisor and supervisory team within the school. It is the expectation of the University that the candidate would be in regular contact with his/her supervisor by means of electronic communication. There should normally be at least one face-to-face meeting in each year of registration. The candidate should visit the University at least once during the period of registration to meet with the supervisory team and the main supervisor (or other member of the supervisory team) should visit the candidate at the external place of study at least once over the period of the degree.² The arrangements for the external research candidature should detail how the requirements for supervision (as outlined in Annex H: Supervision of the University Code of Practice for the Quality Assurance for Research Programmes of Study, accessible on https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/research/annexh.html) will be met. This should include a schedule of planned communications and meetings over the period of registration. A local supervisor may be appointed to oversee the progress of the candidate on a day-to-day basis. The local supervisor must be approved by the School and have confirmed his/her willingness to be involved.

4. **Progression and Examination**

The arrangements for the external research candidature should detail how the requirements of Annex K: Progression and Examination of the University Code of Practice for the Quality Assurance for Research Programmes of Study (accessible on https://www.kent.ac.uk/teaching/qa/codes/research/annexknew.html) will be met. All external candidates will, except in exceptional circumstances, be required to undergo an oral examination. This will normally be held at the University, but, may, with the agreement of the examiners, be held elsewhere. The candidate will be required to meet his/her expenses incurred in attending the oral examination or, in the event of examiners travelling to the candidate, to meet travel expenses incurred by the examiners. The candidate will be expected to prepare and defend the thesis in English.

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² The cost of this visit is covered by the School from the fees paid by the external research degree candidate.