UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

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UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

SPLIT LOCATION POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDY

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1. Introduction

This document sets out the arrangements for students who undertake their research degrees on a split location basis. It should be read in conjunction with the following:

- University's Research Degree Regulation
- http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/Policy/regs/currentregs/regs0607_4_4.pdf

- Code of Practice: Admission of Postgraduate Research Students
- http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/Code10_0607.pdf

- Code of Practice for Assessment of Research Degree Theses
- http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/code11.htm

- Code of Practice: Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Research Students
- http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/code12.htm

What is Split Location Postgraduate Research Study?

Students normally carry out their research and are supervised at the University of Birmingham. However, there are some students who are looking for flexible study arrangements. They are often, though not exclusively, academic staff at overseas or European institutions or equivalent. Split Location Postgraduate Research Study may be appropriate, whereby most of the study period would be spent in a student's country of residence with shorter periods at the University of Birmingham.

International students:
These arrangements are intended for students who register for research degrees by research alone, who are regarded as international students for fee purposes and who will undertake most of their study in their country of residence.

EU students:
These arrangements may also apply to EU students, if exceptionally, their study requirements are in their country of residence.

Some EU students may be subject to other kinds of arrangements, such as Individual Bi-lateral Learning Agreements, Joint Supervision Agreements or Joint PhD Programmes. These are very similar arrangements, whereby a student undertakes research and is supervised both at the University of Birmingham and another academic institution (to date only European Institutions). However, these kinds of arrangements are covered by legal agreements specifying, for example, where the student will pay fees, in which language the thesis will be written. On successful completion, the student will be awarded a joint doctoral degree with a single degree certificate issued jointly by both institutions, showing the logos of both institutions.

UK students:
Normally UK students studying away from the University will be regarded as part-time students, but some of these guidelines may apply, for example, the appointment of a local academic adviser and/or mentor.

Diplomats and NGOs:
These arrangements could apply to UK Diplomats and those working for NGOs who are working abroad. Admissions will consider their eligibility for fee purposes.

When is Split Location Postgraduate Research Study not appropriate?

This method of study should not be seen as a way of reducing fees for international students. Nor should it be regarded as an easy option. For example, support needs may be particularly challenging for Schools/Departments. For the most part, the development of appropriate research skills and experience requires regular interaction with the supervisor,

and other colleagues and attendance at seminars and workshops. Supervising students who are not part of this regular support framework is likely to be more costly than usual. It can be easy for students to find reasons for not attending or getting on with their research.

Students should not normally change to this mode of study part way through their period of study. Any such requests will be regarded as exceptional and will require a rationale for consideration by the Progress and Awards Board of Senate.

These arrangements **do not** apply to students undertaking periods of field work or data collection overseas, who will be expected to pay the standard overseas fee during their period of study, irrespective of where they are undertaking their studies.

2. Admission Requirements

Students will be expected to meet the normal admission requirements for research students. These are set out in 4.4.6 of the University's Regulations for Research Degree Programmes (http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/Policy/regs/currentregs/regs0607_4_4.pdf) and in the Code of Practice: Admission of Postgraduate Research Students (http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/code10.htm).

It is expected that the applicants will normally be experienced in research, although some research training will be provided, and be capable of independent working. Evidence of this should be set out in the checklist (see Section 9 of this document).

The offer letter will include information about how the arrangement will operate, including fee and attendance requirements.

3. Place of Study

a) The facilities for study and research at the proposed place of study should be broadly comparable to those at this University.

Schools/Departments should consider:

i) access to appropriate resources and an appropriate physical environment in order to carry out research effectively (eg library facilities, IT facilities, adequate work space, other specialist equipment as necessary);

ii) contact with other experienced research workers and academic staff;

iii) ease of communications with the supervisor, including e-mail, visits;

iv) access to local academic adviser and/or mentor where deemed necessary and appropriate (see Section 4g below);

v) appropriateness of physical location.

b) The facilities of the place of study should be sufficient. Applicants should not be accepted unless the School has knowledge of the facilities provided by the institution/location where the student will be studying. It may be helpful to consult with the International Office as it has a wealth of information/knowledge about international institutions. In cases where the facilities are lacking, areas where particular inputs are to be supplied by Birmingham or elsewhere must be set out in the checklist.

c) When considering the application, the School should ensure that the proposed research fits with its research interests and its academic/strategic plan.

d) Where necessary, a risk assessment should be undertaken when the student is undertaking work away from Birmingham. Confirmation should be obtained to

ensure that the student has arranged appropriate insurance cover for the duration of such work.

4. Supervision and Monitoring Progress

a) The supervision and monitoring progress of research students must be consistent with the Code of Practice: Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Research Students. (http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/code12.htm). The following paragraphs from the Code have been highlighted to assist students and supervisors to make appropriate supervision arrangements.

b) The Head of School (or nominee) shall be responsible for the co-ordination of arrangements for the supervision of students.

c) The direct responsibilities of the supervisor(s) to the student shall be as set out in Section 5 of the aforementioned Code.

d) The first contact between the supervisor(s) and the student should normally take place at the beginning of the period of study. The supervisor shall maintain regular contact with the student by whatever method of communication is most convenient to both parties .The student shall normally send a monthly report to their supervisor. (Section 2.18 of the Code and Section 5(b) of this document.)

e) There shall be a review of progress between the supervisor and the student at regular intervals and formally at least once a year. This review may be conducted in writing, by e-mail, by fax, by telephone, face–to-face or by whatever method of communication is most convenient to both parties. The normal annual progress monitoring of the student, as set out in Section 3 of the Code, shall also be undertaken.

f) The supervision arrangements and frequency of contact during the periods when the student is not in Birmingham must be specified in the checklist (attached) that should accompany the admissions decision form.

g) It may be appropriate for a local academic adviser, who should normally hold a PhD in a relevant discipline, to be appointed (Section 2.6 of the Code). The School/Department may pay, at its own discretion, an honorarium to the local academic adviser. The University of Birmingham retains full control over the supervision and must be the final arbiter in all cases.

h) The School/Department may also appoint a mentor (Sections 2.5 and 5 of the Code).

5. Students' Responsibilities

a) The responsibilities of students shall be as set out in Section 6 of the Code of Practice: Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Research Students (http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/policy/cop/code12.htm).

b) During periods spent away from Birmingham, it shall be the student's responsibility to maintain close contact with their supervisor, normally sending a monthly report, and to inform them if problems arise with regard to the research programme.

6. Attendance at the University of Birmingham

a) Students must spend the equivalent of a minimum period of full-time study at the University of Birmingham over the whole period of study. The period of full-time study need not be continuous. These periods are shown below:

Qualification	*Minimum*	*Maximum*
PhD	6 months	12 months
Two year Masters (by research alone)	4 months	8 months
One year Masters (by research alone)	2 months	4 months

b) It may be appropriate, taking into account individual circumstances, to specify a longer period up to the maximum over the whole period of study. If the student is required to spend more than the maximum period of attendance in Birmingham, then they should register as a normal full-time student paying the standard fee.

The rest of the period of study will be spent in a student's country of residence on either a full or part-time basis or a mixture of both.

c) Any reduction to the periods of attendance stated above or, exceptionally, requests for early submission of a thesis, must be referred to the Progress and Awards Board of Senate for consideration.

d) All students must complete a training needs analysis and are encouraged to come to Birmingham for a formal induction, to undertake training in research methods and/or skills training relevant to their needs, as specified in 4.4.11 of the University's Regulations for Research Degree Programmes http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/Policy/regs/currentregs/regs0607_4_4.pdf

It is desirable that students come to Birmingham for tutorials and other briefings concerning their research in the early and late stages of their period of study, especially so that they can work with their supervisors for the submission of their theses.

e) The periods of attendance at the University of Birmingham should be set out in the checklist to accompany an admissions decision form. This information will be included in their offer letter with an explanatory note advising that this is provisional and may be subject to amendment. Any changes during the period of study must be formally agreed between the supervisor and student and notified to the Assistant Student Records Manager (Research) in Academic and Student Administration.

f) The arrangements for the viva voce (oral examination) will be the same as for standard research degree students.

7. Periods of Study

a) Students shall be registered on either a full-time or part-time basis (see also Section 6 above).

b) The periods of study shall be as set out in regulation 4.4.7 http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/Policy/regs/currentregs/regs0607_4_4.pdf

8. Tuition Fee, Bench Fee and Additional Costs

a) *Tuition fee:* will be charged in each year in which a student is normally registered. The tuition fee will be subject to revision in each year. Further details on request. (http://www.ppd.bham.ac.uk/planning/fees/index.htm).

The fee will be specified in the offer letter.

b) *Continuation fee:* the normal fee (2006/07 £125 per annum) will be charged when students have completed their minimum period of study and are permitted to transfer to writing up their theses.

c) *Bench fee:* the level of the bench fee, if required, and the purpose(s) for which it is

being levied should be indicated on the Split Location Postgraduate Research Study: Checklist to Accompany Applications. This will be specified in the offer letter.

d) *Additional costs:* to be paid by the student: where appropriate, the cost of visits by supervisors to students will be specified and set out in the offer letter. The rates will be: economy class for airfares; University rates for accommodation, subsistence and expenses, etc as set out in the Guidance Notes on Expenses for Staff (http://www.finance.bham.ac.uk/guidance.htm).

9. Consideration of Applications for Split Location Postgraduate Research Degree Registration

To assist in this process, Schools/Departments shall append to an applicant's admissions decision form a completed checklist providing particular details about the proposed research, the supervisory and fee arrangements.

10. Birmingham Integrated Quality Assurance and Enhancement System (BIQAES)

Split Location Postgraduate Research Study will be highlighted under the normal reviews of research degree programmes/students under BIQAES.