UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

CODE OF PRACTICE ON SPLIT LOCATION STUDY FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH STUDENTS

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Code of Practice on Split Location Study for Postgraduate Research Students

1. Introduction

1.1 This Code of Practice sets out the arrangements for Registered Students who undertake research degrees on a split location basis. It should be read in conjunction with the following:

.1 the University's Academic Regulations;

.2 the Code of Practice on Admission of Postgraduate Research Students;

.3 the Code of Practice on Assessment of Research Degree Theses; and

.4 the Code of Practice on the Supervision and Monitoring of Progress of Research Students.

2. What is Split Location Postgraduate Research Study?

2.1 Registered students who are carrying out research at the University of Birmingham receive supervision and support from the University. However, there are some Registered Students for whom a more flexible arrangement may be more appropriate, whereby the majority of the registration period is spent either in the Registered Student's country of residence, or another country, with shorter periods at the University of Birmingham.

3. Admission and Registration for Split Location Postgraduate Research

3.1 Registered students will be expected to meet the normal admission requirements for research students, as set out in the Academic Regulations and in the Code of Practice on Admission of Postgraduate Research Students.

3.2 Registered students who wish to carry out research on a split location basis shall be registered at the University of Birmingham on either a full-time or part-time basis and the periods of study shall be as set out in Academic Regulations.

3.3 In considering an application from a prospective student to undertake research on a split location basis, the University of Birmingham will take account of:

.1 the facilities at the other proposed place(s) of study and contact with other research workers;

.2 the experience of the student (it is expected that applicants will normally be experienced in research, although some research training will be provided, and will be capable of independent working);

.3 the proposed arrangements for supervision, including ease of communication; and

.4 the relationship of the proposed research project to the range of research interests of the Principal Academic Unit through which the research will be supervised at the University of Birmingham.

3.4 To assist in the process of considering applications for split location postgraduate research, Principal Academic Units will append to the applicant's Admissions Decision Form a completed checklist, which will provide particular details about the proposed research, and the supervisory and fee arrangements.

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

3.6 International students who have registered at the University of Birmingham to carry out research on a split location basis will, for fee purposes, be regarded as Registered international students and will undertake most of their research in their country of residence.

3.7 Split location arrangements may also be applicable to EU Registered Students, if their research requirements are in their country of residence. Some EU Registered 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 Registered Student undertakes research and is supervised both at the University of Birmingham and another academic institution. 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. Upon successful completion, the Registered Student will be awarded a joint degree with a single degree certificate issued jointly by both institutions and showing the logos of both institutions.

3.8 Normally UK Registered Students undertaking split location research activity away from the University of Birmingham will be registered as part-time students, but some of this Code of Practice may apply, for example, to the appointment of a local academic adviser and/or mentor.

3.9 This Code of Practice is applicable to UK Diplomats and persons working for Non-Governmental Organisations, who are working overseas and undertaking split location research activity.

4. The Place of Study

4.1 The facilities for study and research at the other proposed academic institution should be broadly comparable to those of the University of Birmingham and sufficient for the purposes of conducting the research. Principal Academic Units should have knowledge of the facilities provided by the prospective institution and should verify:

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

.2 contact with other experienced research workers and academic staff;

.3 ease of communications with the supervisor;

.4 access to local academic adviser and/or mentor where deemed necessary and appropriate; and

.5 appropriateness of the physical location.

4.2 Where the facilities for study and research at the prospective other institution are deemed by the University of Birmingham to be insufficient to enable the prospective student to conduct research on a split location basis, the Principal Academic Unit should compile a list of inputs and requirements that must be met before the split location research can commence.

4.3 The Principal Academic Unit should carry out an assessment of the risks of any split location research and should request written confirmation from the Registered Student that they have obtained the requisite cover in respect of health and any other appropriate type of insurance to enable them to carry out research in another country on a split location basis.

5. Supervision and Monitoring of Progress of Split Location Research Students

5.1 The supervision and monitoring progress of Registered Students undertaking research on a split location basis will be in accordance with the Code of Practice on the Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Research Students.

5.2 The Head of Principal Academic Unit (or nominee) shall be responsible for the co-ordination of arrangements for the supervision of Registered Students undertaking research on a split location basis.

5.3 The first contact between the supervisor(s) and the Registered Student should normally take place at the beginning of the period of registration. The supervisor shall maintain regular contact with the Registered Student by whatever method of communication is most convenient to both parties. Unless otherwise agreed, the Registered student shall normally send a monthly report to their supervisor.

5.4 There shall be a review of progress between the supervisor and the Registered 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 usual annual progress monitoring of the Registered Student shall also be undertaken by the Principal Academic Unit.

5.5 The supervision arrangements and frequency of contact during the periods when the Registered Student is not in Birmingham must be agreed in advance by both parties. This will be specified in the checklist that accompanies the Admissions Decision Form.

5.6 It will normally be appropriate for a local academic adviser, who will normally hold a PhD in a relevant discipline, to be appointed. The Progress and Awards Board shall approve such cases where an academic adviser is not appointed.

5.7 The Principal Academic Unit may also appoint a mentor to support the Registered Student.

6. The Responsibilities of Postgraduate Research Students Undertaking Research on a Split Location Basis

6.1 The responsibilities of Registered Students carrying out research on a split location basis shall be as set out in the Code of Practice on the Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Research Students.

6.2 During periods spent away from Birmingham, it shall be the Registered 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.

7. Attendance at the University of Birmingham by Split Location Research Students

7.1 Registered Students must spend the equivalent of a minimum period of full-time research at the University of Birmingham over the whole period of research, which need not be continuous. These periods are shown below:

Qualification	Minimum
One year masters (by research alone)	2 months
Two year masters (by research alone)	4 months
PhD	6 months

7.2 It may be appropriate, taking account of individual circumstances, to specify a longer period up to the maximum over the whole period of research. If the Registered Student is required to spend more than the maximum period of attendance at the University of Birmingham, then they should register as a normal full-time Registered Student paying the standard fee. The rest of the period of research will be spent in the Registered Student's country of residence on either a full or part-time basis, or a mixture of both. The periods are shown below:

Qualification	Maximum
One year masters (by research alone)	4 months
Two year masters (by research alone)	8 months
PhD	12 months

7.3 All Registered Students undertaking a postgraduate research degree by split location are encouraged to come to the University of Birmingham for a formal induction, to complete a training needs analysis and to undertake training in research methods and/or skills as specified by their Principal Academic Unit.

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

7.5 The periods of attendance at the University of Birmingham should be set out in the checklist that is appended to the Admissions Decision Form. This information will be included in the offer letter, together with an explanatory note advising that this is provisional and may be subject to amendment. Any changes during the period of research must be formally agreed between the Registered Student and their supervisor, with notification being sent to the Principal

Academic Unit and the Director of Academic Services (or nominee).

7.6 The arrangements for the viva voce examination will be the same as for other research students of the University of Birmingham, as set out in the Academic Regulations.

7.7 Any reduction in 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.

8 Fees and Additional Costs

8.1 Tuition fees, which will be specified in the offer letter, are subject to revision each year, and will be charged in each year of registration. Further details are available upon request to the Director of Finance.

8.2 Continuation fees will be charged when Registered Students have completed their minimum period of research and have been permitted to transfer to writing up their thesis.

8.3 If required, and their purpose having been clearly indicated on the checklist appended to the Admissions Decision Form, bench fees will be charged, their rates having been specified in the offer letter.

8.4 Additional costs, to be paid by the Registered Student where appropriate, may include the costs of visits by supervisors. Rates will be economy class for airfares and University rates for accommodation, subsistence and expenses, etc. (set out in the Guidance Notes on Expenses for Staff).

9. When is Split Location Postgraduate Research not appropriate?

9.1 These arrangements do not apply to Registered Students undertaking periods of field work or data collection overseas; these Registered Students will be expected to pay the [standard overseas] fee appropriate to their domicile during their period of research, irrespective of where they are undertaking their studies.

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

9.3 This method of research 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 Principal Academic Units. 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.

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

10.1 Split location postgraduate research will be highlighted under the usual reviews of research degree programmes carried out under BQIAES.