



# Withdrawal Policy for Research Degrees

## **1. General Information**

- 1.1 Notification of withdrawal of PhD candidature may be initiated by the research student, the Supervisory Committee or SOAS Registry.
- 1.2 At any stage in the process, the research student can seek advice from their Supervisory Committee (first supervisor, second supervisor etc.), Research Tutor, Associate Dean (Research), the Doctoral Research Centre or Registry. Students can also access the SOAS Student Advice and Wellbeing services available here: <https://www.soas.ac.uk/studentadviceandwellbeing/>
- 1.3 The Supervisory Committee may initiate the withdrawal of a student where there are serious concerns about the academic progress of the student and/or their compliance with degree regulations and procedures. The Supervisory Committee must be in agreement about this decision. Where this is not the case, the Supervisory Committee must refer the matter to the appropriate Research Tutor or to the Associate Dean (Research) in cases where the Research Tutor is part of the Supervisory Committee.
- 1.4 Withdrawal of a research student by the Supervisory Committee requires the approval of the relevant Research Tutor, the Associate Dean (Research) and the Academic Registrar.
- 1.5 SOAS Registry may initiate the withdrawal of a student in cases where there is a failure to pay fees or meet enrolment requirements as outlined in SOAS Regulations or the SOAS Code of Practice for Research Degrees.
- 1.6 Withdrawal of a research student by the Registry requires the approval of the Academic Registrar.
- 1.7 Students who are withdrawn from the PhD programme will be notified of their right to appeal against the decision. Until the appeal process is concluded, the student will remain current on the student database and will have access to the building and School resources (i.e. Moodle, library, email etc.).
- 1.8 The only exception to 1.7 will be where there are concerns about a student's welfare or if their behaviour is deemed so serious that the student must be denied access to the building and resources immediately.

## **2. Notification of Withdrawal by the Student**

- 2.1 Students who are experiencing difficulties with their PhD programme are advised to talk to their Supervisory Committee (first supervisor, second supervisor etc.), Research Tutor and the Associate Dean (Research). It may be possible to find a solution to the problem to enable the student to continue with the PhD programme.
- 2.2 Once the student has decided that withdrawal is the right option, they must complete a Withdrawal Form and submit this to the Doctoral Research Centre.
- 2.3 SOAS does not normally lay any claim to the intellectual property of the research undertaken by research students. However, students who wish to withdraw because they intend to continue their research at another institution should seek advice from their Supervisory

Committee to ensure that there are no issues in relation to the property rights with regards to their research.

- 2.4 Once the Withdrawal Form has been completed and submitted this will be processed by the Registry.

### **3. Notification of Withdrawal by the supervisory Committee**

- 3.1 Students can be withdrawn at the stage of consideration for upgrade to PhD enrolment in line with the procedures outlined in the SOAS Code of Practice for Research Degrees.

- 3.2 In accordance with the Degree Regulations and the SOAS Code of Practice for Research Degrees, withdrawal may also be initiated following completion of the Annual Report Form where progression to the next academic session is not approved.

- 3.3 In addition to withdrawal at the upgrade stage or following completion of the Annual Report Form, the Supervisory Committee can recommend that a student be withdrawn at any point in their registration if there are serious concerns about a student's academic progress of the student and/or their compliance with degree regulations and research requirements. In this case, the Supervisory Committee must do the following:

- (a) There are three stages to the withdrawal process:

**Stage 1:** First warning from the Supervisory Committee

**Stage 2:** Second warning from Supervisory Committee

**Stage 3:** Final warning – meeting with the Head of Doctoral Research Centre.

- (b) **Stage 1: First warning**

If there are serious concerns about academic progress of the student and/or their compliance with degree regulations and procedures, this should be raised with the student at the earliest opportunity in a meeting with the Supervisory Committee. The reasons for the Supervisory Committee's concerns must be made clear at the meeting and provided in writing after the meeting (with a copy to the Doctoral Research Centre).

- (i) Academic Progress: A plan for remediation must be agreed between the student and the Supervisory Committee in order for the student to address the concerns. The action plan must have an agreed timeframe, the minimum period of which is one month. The action plan must be documented in writing and a copy provided to the student and the Doctoral Research Centre. The student will have the right of appeal against the decision.

- (ii) Compliance with degree regulations and procedures: It should be agreed at the meeting that the behaviour must cease immediately. An agreed timeframe, the minimum period of which is one month, should be set to review the student's progress. The outcome of the meeting will be documented in writing and a copy provided to the student and the Doctoral Research Centre. The student will have the right of appeal against the decision.

- (c) **Stage 2: Second warning**

If the concerns about unsatisfactory academic progress of the student and/or their compliance with degree regulations and research requirements have not been addressed satisfactorily within the agreed timeframe, the Supervisory Committee can issue a second

warning and a revised remediation plan and a timeframe for compliance.

**(d) Stage 3: Final warning – meeting with the Head of Doctoral School**

If the issues are still not resolved by the next review meeting, the Supervisory Committee must meet with the Head of the Doctoral Research Centre to initiate Stage 3 of the process. The student will be called to a meeting with the Head of the Doctoral Research Centre who will inform the student that if there is no resolution by the next Supervisory review meeting then formal withdrawal procedures will be instigated. The Head of the Doctoral Research Centre will inform the Doctoral Research Centre, Registry and the Supervisory Committee of the outcome of this meeting and the Doctoral Research Centre will confirm the outcome in writing to the student.

(e) If there is no further improvement in the student's academic progress or compliance by the next Supervisory review date, then the Supervisory Committee will inform the Head of the Doctoral Research Centre of this. The Head of the Doctoral Research Centre will once again meet with the student and inform them that formal withdrawal procedures will be initiated.

#### **4. Notification of Withdrawal by the Registry**

4.1 The relevant Registry Section will advise the student of any outstanding enrolment requirements and a deadline for completion of enrolment in each year of study. The relevant Registry Sections include the Fees and Funding Section and the Student Administration and Progression Section.

4.2 Failure to meet enrolment requirements will result in the issue being referred to the relevant Registry Manager. The Registry Manager will contact the student with instructions on the requirements and the deadline for completion. The Registry Manager will also advise of the procedures to be followed if enrolment requirements are not met.

4.3 Failure to complete enrolment requirements by the deadline will result in the Registry Manager referring the case to the Head of Registry with a recommendation to initiate Withdrawal Procedures.

4.4 The Head of Registry may either initiate Withdrawal Procedures at this stage or contact the student directly regarding requirements for enrolment.

#### **Document Version**

<b>Valid from</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Changes</b>	<b>Date</b>
2015/16	Marcus Cerny, Doctoral School Manager		September 2015
2019/20	Nadja Abia, Curriculum and Regulations Officer	Updated departmental titles and terminology to reflect changes resulting from the OPS restructuring.	September 2019