Aston University

ASTON UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL

Information Handbook for Postgraduate Research Students

Academic Year 2011/2

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Welcome from Head of Aston University Graduate School 4
1. Introduction to Aston University 5
2. Your Personal Support Network 6
2.1 Supervisor 6
2.2 Associate Supervisor 6
2.3 Advisor 7
2.4 School Research Administrator 7
2.5 Associate Dean Research 7
2.6 Other Research Students 7
2.7 Mentoring Programme 7
3. The Administrative Process 8
3.1 Enrolment 8
3.2 Contact 9
3.3 University ID Card (uniCARD) 9
3.4 Core Research Skills Training 9
3.5 Recording Your Research Activities – International Students 10
3.6 Qualifying Report 11
3.7 Annual Progress Report 11
3.8 Thesis Submission Time Limits and Obtaining an Extension 11
3.9 Leave of Absence 12
3.10 Vacation 13
3.11 Tier 4 Student Authorised Absences 13
3.12 Your Thesis 13
3.13 Your *Viva Voce* Examination 14
4. School Specific Information 15
Welcome from the Research Degrees Programme Director 15
4.1 Introduction to Aston Business School 16
4.1.1 Aston Business School Vision and Mission 16
4.1.2 Research Degrees Programme Mission 17
4.2 Facilities 18
4.2.1 Doctoral Suite 18
4.2.2 Allocation of Research Degrees Programme Desk Space 18
4.2.3 Access to the Doctoral Suite and Security Issues 19
4.2.4 Student's Mail 19
4.3 Research Areas and Groups 19
4.4 Training 20
4.4.1 Research Methods Course 20
4.4.2 MSc in Management Research (by Research) 24
4.4.3 Research Methods Course by Distance Learning 24
4.4.4 RMC and RDP Blackboard Sites 25
4.4.5 Associate Certificate in Teaching and Learning 25
4.5 Recording Your Research Activities – UK/EU Students 25
4.6 Contacts 26
4.7 Other Key Information 28
4.7.1 Research Training Support Grant 28
4.7.2 Conference Funding 28
4.7.3 Opportunities to Present Your Research 28
4.7.4 Student Feedback 29

4.7.5 Admission to Beta Gamma Sigma Membership (BGS) 30
5. University Resources and Information 31
5.1 The Advice & Representation Centre 31
5.2 Central Teaching Operations 31
5.3 The Hub - Student Support Services 31
5.3.1 .. Counselling Service 32
5.3.2 .. Credit Control (Finance) 33
5.3.3 .. The Disability and Additional Needs Unit (DANU) 33
5.3.4 .. International Student Advisers 34
5.3.5 .. Registry 34
5.4 The Students' JobShop 35
5.5 Training and Development 35
5.6 Academic Malpractice 36
5.7 Equality and Diversity 37
5.8 Quality Management: What it is and how to play your part 37
5.9 Important University Documents 38
5.10 Information Systems Aston (ISA) 38
5.11 JS Campus Bookshop 39
5.12 Library & Information Services 39
5.13 Sports and Recreational Facilities 40
6. Student Resources 43
6.1 Work Space 43
6.2 Photocopying 43
6.3 Laboratory Records and Intellectual Property (IP) 43
6.4 Communication 44
6.5 Conference Travel 44
6.6 Ethical Approval 45
6.7 Data Protection 45
7. Health & Safety 46
7.1 First Aid & Accidents 46
7.2 Security/Working Out of Hours 46
7.3 Working Alone 46
7.4 Fire safety 47
7.5 Recharging of Personal Electrical Equipment 47
8. Further Information 47
8.1 Other Useful Contacts 47
8.2 Car Parking 48
8.3 Mobile Phones and Pagers 48
Appendix 1: Code of Practice for Research Degrees 49
Appendix 2: Learning Agreement 50
Appendix 2a: Training Needs Analysis 56
Appendix 3: Record of Supervisory Meeting Form 61
Appendix 4: Guide to Requirements for the Qualifying Report 62
Appendix 5: Researcher Development Statement 64
Appendix 6: Rights and Responsibilities of Students - Behaviour on Campus 66
Appendix 7: ABS Research Student Progression Chart 68

PLEASE NOTE: the information in this Handbook is correct at the time of publication but may be subject to change.

Welcome from Head of Aston University Graduate School

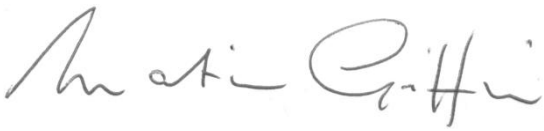
On behalf of Aston University Graduate School, I would like to welcome you to your research studies here at Aston.

Aston University Graduate School was formed with the objective of providing a supportive environment for all research students across the University with a view to widening and enriching your experience during your research studies. The Graduate School brings together under one umbrella the responsibility for maintaining the Quality Assurance of your research studies and the development of your training in core research and transferable skills thus enabling all research students studying at Aston to realise their full potential, whichever career path they choose.

Your School of Study is the major centre for the delivery of subject-specific postgraduate training and development. The University Graduate School will provide a focus for the sharing of ideas and best practice, such that these are implemented across the University. The Graduate School will support and promote cross-institutional working and, together with the cross-University Research Student Society sponsored by Schools, is promoting both formal and informal events that will bring all research students together on a regular basis.

There is no doubt that your journey from enrolment to graduation will be a challenging one, but it should also be an enjoyable one and both the Graduate School team and your School of Study are here to give you full support and advice whenever you need it and the names of key contacts are provided in this Student Handbook.

Other information you will need during your study is also present in this Student Handbook or can be found on the Graduate School website which contains links to Support, Regulations, Training and Development, and other opportunities which you may wish to embark upon. During your training you will also be supported by a Graduate Development Team, with experts in different areas (eg Centre for Staff and Graduate Development, business issues, Library and IT, and Career Development) who collectively provide a range of training and development opportunities for all research students and research staff. Engagement in these opportunities provides an excellent forum for the exchange of ideas and information across discipline boundaries, and is an important part of your research development. So please take advantage of all of the opportunities available to you while at Aston and enjoy a fulfilling and rewarding journey to the completion and award of your research degree.



Professor Martin Griffin BSc, PhD, FiBiol
Pro-Vice Chancellor for Research
Head of Aston University Graduate School
Aston University

1. Introduction to Aston University

Founded in 1895 as the Birmingham Municipal Technical School and a University since 1966, Aston has an established record of academic excellence.

The University's Mission

We have broad strengths at Aston. We start from a position where our staff members have a strong commitment to teaching and to research and real strengths in both. We combine close and important links to our local community with a growing international reputation. This gives us an exciting and challenging mission – especially for a small university – to develop the three corners of our academic triangle: delivering an excellent learning experience for our students, enhanced by interaction with internationally recognised, relevant research, and linked to innovative support for local companies and engagement with schools and the community, involving students and staff in raising aspirations and attainment.

The University's Vision is to be:

A Centre of Excellence in Learning and Teaching

- Creating intellectual challenge in a supportive environment
- Building partnerships to widen participation and enhance the professional and vocational focus of our programmes
- Offering flexible delivery tailored to individual needs

A Centre of Excellence in Rigorous, Relevant Research

- Crossing boundaries: interdisciplinary and international
- From science and scholarship to practical application
- Delivering accessible research outputs to support industry, business, public policy and the professions

A Centre of Excellence in Community Engagement

- Raising aspirations amongst families across our community
- Supporting the growth of business
- Recognised for best practice in knowledge transfer and the 'Knowledge Economy' through our work in Birmingham and the City Region.

How is Aston organised?

The Vice-Chancellor, as the principal academic and executive officer, is supported by the Senior Pro-Vice-Chancellor and three Pro-Vice-Chancellors, one of whom has responsibility for research across the University.

The academic activity of the University is organised in four Schools of Study.

- Aston Business School
- School of Engineering and Applied Science
- School of Languages and Social Sciences
- School of Life and Health Sciences

In addition there is a cross-School Interdisciplinary Studies programme co-ordinated by the Interdisciplinary Studies Unit.

Where is Aston University?
Aston University is only a few minutes' walk from the centre of Birmingham. Britain's second city is flourishing due to a period of regeneration and growth and is internationally recognised as a leader in leisure, entertainment, business and sport with facilities to match. The city centre is a fusion of attractive squares, modern shopping arcades, diverse pubs and restaurants, and fine museums, theatres and art galleries. The University campus, together with Birmingham Science Park Aston, occupies a green and leafy 60-acre site right in the heart of the city.

What is the Aston Triangle?
Aston Triangle is the distinctive, attractive, urban home of a creative community incorporating the University's academic, residential and recreational facilities and Birmingham Science Park Aston. See http://www1.aston.ac.uk/new-students/moving/maps/ on the Aston website for maps, directions and other useful information on finding your way around.

2. Your Personal Support Network

2.1 Supervisor

The Code of Practice for Research Degrees (see Appendix 1) includes an outline of your and your Supervisor's responsibilities to each other regarding your research; these may be expanded upon or clarified by your School of Study and will be included in the Learning Agreement you discuss with your Supervisor shortly after you start your research (see Appendix 2 for details).

Your Supervisor is your mentor and primary source of all help and guidance. S/he is there to guide and direct you. You should develop a good working relationship with your Supervisor and expect to have regular meetings. It is your joint responsibility to make sure these meetings are useful and productive, and also to ensure that a record of the meetings is retained (see Appendix 3 for a template Record of Supervisory Meeting Form for doing this). The Meeting Form will provide the basis of research progress to discuss at the next meeting. In the early stages of your research, meetings with your Supervisor should be quite regular. In the latter stages, when you become more independent, these meetings will become less frequent, but perhaps more technically intense. At all stages of your research, the completed Meeting Forms from at least four, ie quarterly, formal meetings will need to be submitted with your Annual Progress Report (see Sections 3.6 and 3.7 below). If you are in any way unhappy about your interaction with your Supervisor, which might seem significantly different to other local students' experiences with their own supervisors, then you should discuss these issues with the School Research Administrator in the first instance.

2.2 Associate Supervisor

In addition to your main Supervisor, you may also have one or more Associate Supervisors who provide additional expertise and support; this is particularly useful when your research is interdisciplinary. Your Associate Supervisor(s) may also be able to suggest alternative methods or reference sources precisely because they will have a different skill set to your main Supervisor. Your Associate Supervisor(s)

should be involved in some of your progression reviews jointly with your Supervisor and may also take part in your Qualifying Report *viva voce* examination.

2.3 Advisor

In some circumstances, it may be appropriate for an Advisor to be appointed. An example of when the appointment of an Advisor may be involved is when the Supervisor has not previously supervised a research degree student to completion. The Advisor's primary role is to provide guidance to your Supervisor. If an Advisor is appointed, s/he may be present at meetings and will attend your Qualifying Report *viva voce* examination.

2.4 School Research Administrator

The School Research Administrator in the central School office provides help and guidance on all aspects of your interactions with the University including regulations, your Annual Progress Reports, your thesis examination, and swipe card problems. If you have queries which cannot be resolved at a local level, you should visit the School Research Administrator for a discussion.

2.5 Associate Dean Research

The Associate Dean Research oversees the School's research activity, including the research student experience, and is the final point of contact for your issues within the School.

2.6 Other Research Students

You are working with other students around you at different stages of their own research. You should seek their advice on personal and academic issues. They can be a good source of help on how the University runs, where to find places in Birmingham, and what to do about any problems you might have with your studies.

2.7 Mentoring Programme

The transition to postgraduate study is exciting but can also sometimes be daunting. You may be new to the city or may live off campus, you may be the first in your family to go on to postgraduate study, you may be returning to education after some years, or may be the only one of your group of friends to come to Aston. Having the support of a current student, who remembers what it's like starting out as a postgraduate research student, can help you to settle in quickly and make the most of your time here. The nature of support is primarily pastoral, and may include practical advice and tips. This will vary over the duration of the relationship but initially this may focus on practical issues:

- Finding out about accommodation
- Getting to grips with University processes
- Dealing with the 'culture shock' of a new environment
- Finding out about transport and getting about
- Making friends and getting involved with student societies
- Achieving a good life/study balance

As the relationship matures and you feel more settled, you may want to seek more specific support from your mentor, such as:

- Ideas on how to manage your time while studying and/or working
- What support is available on campus
- …just having someone to chat to who understands your concerns

Mentors are NOT supervisors; they are there as an additional resource to support you through your studies. Mentors can offer you a student perspective, having been in your shoes not so long ago!

What can you gain by having a mentor?

• Practical advice, encouragement and support
• Share another person's knowledge and skills, learning from the experiences of others
• Increased social and academic confidence
• Empowerment to make decisions
• Develop communication, study and personal skills
• Develop strategies for dealing with both personal and academic issues
• Identify goals and establish a sense of direction
• Gain valuable insight into the next stage of your university career

If you are a current postgraduate research student, why not apply to become a mentor?

• Improve your communication and personal skills
• Develop your leadership and management qualities
• Reinforce your own study skills
• Increase your confidence and motivation
• Take advantage of a volunteering opportunity
• Enhance your CV
• Increase your social contact
• Gain recognition for your skills and experience
• Gain a sense of fulfilment and personal growth

If you are interested in this programme, or would like further details, please contact:
Baljit Gill, Learner Enhancement Manager
b.k.gill@aston.ac.uk
0121 204 4778

3. The Administrative Process

3.1 Enrolment

Before commencing your research, you will need to enrol with the University. The first stage is on-line pre-enrolment, during which you will be assigned a student number, username and password, followed in most cases by face-to-face enrolment

at Aston at which you will be required to present your original identification and qualifications documents. Once you have enrolled, you will receive a University ID card (uniCARD) and your research start date will be confirmed as one of 1st October, 1st January, 1st April or 1st July, depending on which is closest to your date of enrolment. All research students are enrolled initially for an unspecified higher degree and may be recommended for progression to the MPhil, PhD or Professional Doctorate programme based on a satisfactory qualifying report or completion of progression point requirements. A PhD/Professional Doctorate must be completed within three years (full-time students) or six years (part-time students) from the research start date and an MPhil within two or four years, respectively.

3.2 Contact

We usually contact our students by email and will use the Aston email address that will be allocated when you enrol (not personal/hotmail accounts). There are University rules about students forwarding emails to non-Aston accounts – details will be provided by School computer technicians. If you experience any problems with email, email the helpdesk on isa_helpdesk@aston.ac.uk, telephone 0121 204 3445 or visit Room 477 on the fourth floor of the Main Building.

Internal post is distributed through the postgraduate research student pigeon holes; students are advised to check the pigeon holes regularly.

3.3 University ID Card (uniCARD)

Students are issued with an individual University ID card (uniCARD). This Card has an **ID** number, which is **registered to you.** The system logs the use of this Card. Please do not loan your Card to anyone else; if you do, you will be in breach of University Regulations and subject to disciplinary action. All *bona fide* members of staff, students and registered visitors will be issued with a Card for their own use.

Cards must be worn at all times. Cardholders are available from Security. Any student not wearing their Card will be asked to leave the building. Information is available at http://www1.aston.ac.uk/ict/studentguide/unicard

If you lose your uniCARD, you must report the loss as soon as possible to Information Systems Aston (ISA), located in Room 477 on the fourth floor of the Main Building, or telephone 0121 204 3445; email isa_helpdesk@aston.ac.uk. You can also report a lost Card via the website.

If you lose your Card, there is a replacement charge of £10. If the Card has been stolen it will be replaced free of charge on receipt of a police report number.

3.4 Core Research Skills Training

University and School regulations require all PhD/Professional Doctorate students to complete at least 90 hours of core research skills training during their degree, and MPhil students to complete at least 60 hours. Students with an approved MSc in Research Methods may be exempt from some of the University skills training

requirements on request (check with your Supervisor if you think you may be exempt). Your Supervisor will review your training needs with you when you meet to discuss the Learning Agreement, and a Training Needs Analysis form is appended to the Learning Agreement for that purpose (see Appendix 2a). Your skills development will be reviewed at least annually, at the time of the Annual Progress Report, and you should keep the record of training undertaken, and to be taken, up-to-date.

The training and development activities that can count towards research skills training hours are:

- Internal courses and workshops offered by Departments represented in the Graduate Development Team and offered through the course booking system (see details below in Section 5.5). This includes Module IS4001: Research Skills and Professional Development which, if completed, counts for 20 hours, plus 20 hours if the associated assessment is undertaken;
- Internal courses and seminars offered by your School;
- Poster presentations at conferences, seminars or poster competitions (10 hours per event if activity is external to the University; 5 hours for University events);
- Oral presentations at conferences/seminars (15 hours per event if activity is external to the University; 8 hours for University events);
- External workshop requiring active participation: 5 hours.

You are required to submit details of the skills training undertaken to your Supervisor for inclusion in your Annual Progress Report for the School Research Committee at the end of each year of your research. Details of your skills training can be recorded when you report on your research activities (see Section 3.5 or 4.7 below). You will need to submit a full list of the 90/60 hours with your thesis for forwarding to the examiners.

3.5 Recording Your Research Activities – International Students

If you are an international student from outside the EU, you will be asked to report on your research activities on a monthly basis (or every two months if you are part time) because the University is legally required to confirm that you are engaging with your research on a regular basis and the recording of your research activities will provide a means of confirming that that is the case.

You will be invited to record your research activities via the University portal, MAP (My Aston Portal), each month by following a guided process. Once you have recorded your research activities for the relevant period (eg library induction, conference attendance, seminars, data collection), you will submit them to your Supervisor, through MAP, for his/her approval and/or comment. Your Supervisor will indicate which of the activities, or what proportion of them, are eligible to contribute towards your skills training. Using MAP, you will be able to print out a list of all of the research activities you have recorded and a list of the approved skills training hours.

3.6 Qualifying Report

Towards the end of your first year (second year for part-time students) you are required to submit a report of your research to your Supervisor. The report should be a minimum of 6,000 words, or as specified by your School, and should include a literature review, a methodology section, a description of research already completed, a discussion and detailed plans for the research you intend to undertake for your higher degree. A 'Guide to the requirements for the Qualifying Report' is shown in Appendix 4. You will be assessed on the content of your report at a *viva voce* examination conducted by your Supervisor, Advisor (if appointed) and at least one other member of academic staff. The purpose of the *viva* is not only to ascertain your academic potential but also to provide independent advice on your research that students usually find very helpful. A joint report on your performance will then be submitted to the School Research Committee, within an Annual Progress Report, making an appropriate recommendation as to your progress: ie that you be enrolled for a PhD or Professional Doctorate degree, an MPhil degree or be asked to withdraw. You will receive a letter of confirmation and a copy of the Report in due course.

3.7 Annual Progress Report

At the end of each year of enrolment, your Supervisor is required to report on your progress. This includes submitting copies of the Record of Supervisory Meeting Forms (see Appendix 3 for details) from at least three (usually quarterly) formal meetings held during the research year and your revised Training Needs Analysis form, updated to reflect further skills development requirements identified following review.

If your work is satisfactory, you will be allowed to proceed to the next year of your MPhil/PhD/Professional Doctorate. Part of the Annual Progress Report will be completed in consultation between you and your Supervisor and part of it is for you to complete on your own. This provides you with the opportunity to comment on the supervision that you have received over the previous year, in confidence, and will not be shown to your Supervisor without your permission. A letter of confirmation and a copy of the Annual Progress Report will be sent to you in due course.

3.8 Thesis Submission Time Limits and Obtaining an Extension

The prescribed time limits for the submission of your thesis for examination are detailed in the General Regulations for Degrees by Research and Thesis as follows:

a Full-time students

		MSc/MA (by Research)	MPhil	PhD/PD
	Earliest date for submission:	not applicable	after one year	after two years
	Maximum time allowed:	one year	two years	three years

b Part-time students

		MSc/MS (by Research)	MPhil	PhD/PD
	Earliest date for submission:	not applicable	after two years	after four years
	Maximum time allowed:	two years	four years	six years

While it is desirable that your thesis should be submitted within the prescribed time limit, the Regulations allow you to apply to the School Research Committee for a maximum one year extension of time if you can provide a good reason as to why the thesis cannot be submitted on time. Your application should be made through the Research Administrator in the School Research Office at least one month before the thesis is due to be submitted. It should be accompanied by a timetable, detailing how your thesis will be completed within the additional time requested together with a letter of support from your Supervisor.

If your extension is approved, you will be considered to be writing up your thesis for the period of the extension and you should ensure that you re-enrol (in August/September, irrespective of your research start date) via MAP. You will then be required to submit your PhD/Professional Doctorate thesis within a **maximum** of four full-time/seven part-time years and you and your Supervisor should be working towards this absolute final submission date from the outset of your research programme. It is extremely unlikely that you will be granted an extension of time of more than one year. Such a request would require a waiver of regulations and is only likely to be considered if there are exceptional circumstances. Research Councils impose heavy penalties on departments and institutions whose students take longer than four/seven years to submit a PhD thesis and your Supervisor and the School Research Committee are very much aware of the importance of this deadline.

3.9 Leave of Absence

Under special circumstances (eg documented ill-health), it is possible to take a leave of absence from your research. It is very important that this is done at the appropriate time, when the illness or other sufficient cause is current. You should discuss requesting a leave of absence with your Supervisor so that s/he is kept fully informed of your situation and can show their support by countersigning your request.

If you are a sponsored student, your Supervisor may request on your behalf that your funding is suspended until such time as you return to your research studies. If this is to happen, you will receive a letter notifying you of this when your leave of absence is confirmed. The letter will ask you to inform the School Research Administrator when you are returning so that the reinstatement of your maintenance grant can be arranged.

You should also be aware that a leave of absence will affect the date when your Annual Progress Report will be due and the date for submission of your thesis. For

3.10 Vacation

The General Regulations for Degrees by Research and Thesis state that: 'A research student may be allowed up to six weeks vacation a year by prior arrangement with their Supervisor, or a vacation allowance as specified by their sponsor.' Please note that this is a total of six weeks (excluding days when the University is officially closed for Christmas, Easter and Bank Holidays) across the full 52-week calendar year. You should discuss any arrangements for taking leave with your Supervisor prior to doing so. You can also expect your Supervisor to let you know when s/he will be absent for a prolonged period.

3.11 Tier 4 Student Authorised Absences

As part of the Points-Based Immigration System (Tier 4), Aston University as an educational sponsor for overseas students is responsible for monitoring student attendance and must record all different types of student absences for overseas students. Under the UK Border Agency (UKBA) regulations, if you have a Tier 4 Visa you must be present on the University premises for the purpose of your research studies, for the entire duration of your course, unless you apply for, and are granted, a monitored 'authorised absence' from your School, for a specific period of time. If you need to leave the UK during your doctoral studies you must obtain written permission from your School Research Office for short periods of absence, for example to undertake research overseas, to return home due to bereavement, an illness or a family celebration. If your School approves your absence, you will be given a Letter of Authorised Absence which you must show at immigration when you return to the UK. It is essential that you inform the Research Administrator in your School of any absence as soon as possible. *Please note that the UK Border Agency may not allow you to re-enter the UK if you do not have written permission from Aston University to be absent from your studies.*

It is very important that those students under the Tier 4 system keep up-to-date with current immigration regulations as these may change in the future. You should check the International Student Support Unit (ISSU) website, your emails, MAP and Blackboard regularly for updates. Further information can be found at:
http://www1.aston.ac.uk/current-students/studentsupport/issu/immigration/

3.12 Your Thesis

Three copies of your thesis* and two copies of your thesis summary should be submitted to the Research Administrator in the School Research Office by the submission date (see Section 3.8). You should submit loose-bound copies, in a format described in the Special Regulations for the Presentation of Theses. The length of your thesis will depend very much on the nature of your research but University regulations have set an upper limit of 80,000 words. If you anticipate exceeding this limit by more than 25% you should seek the advice of your Supervisor.
**If your Supervisor does not wish to receive a hard copy of your thesis, only two copies of your loose-bound thesis need be submitted.*

3.13 Your *Viva Voce* Examination

As your submission deadline draws near, your Supervisor will nominate an internal and an external examiner for your *viva voce* examination. An independent chairperson will also be nominated by your School's Research Office. Once approved by the Associate Dean of Research and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research, your Supervisor will arrange your *viva*. This should be held within three months of the date you submitted your thesis. If your Supervisor wishes to be present at the viva, s/he must consult with you and obtain your agreement beforehand. During your *viva*, you will be questioned about your research, including: your literature review, choice of methodology, data collection, analysis and interpretation. Such examinations vary in duration but can often last about three hours. At the end of a PhD/Professional Doctorate *viva*, the examiner will make one of the following recommendations:

That you:

I. Be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy/Professional Doctorate
II. Make minor corrections to your thesis within 3 or 6 months, as specified by the examiners, before the award is made
III. Revise and resubmit your thesis within 12 months on the basis of existing work or within 2 years on the basis of additional work
IV. For PhD submissions: be awarded the degree of Master of Philosophy (corrections within 3 or 6 months as specified by the examiners may be required)
V. For PhD submissions: revise and resubmit your thesis for the degree of Master of Philosophy
VI. Not be awarded a degree
VII. that the unsuccessful DProf thesis or portfolio be recommended to the relevant Board of Examiners as equivalent to the Master's thesis (in cases where there is a linked Masters only).

For MPhil candidates, the examiners can recommend that the degree is awarded, that minor corrections are required within 3 or 6 months as specified by the examiners, that the thesis be revised and resubmitted on the basis of existing or additional work (within 1 or 2 years respectively) or that no degree be awarded.

4. School Specific Information

Welcome from the Research Degrees Programme Director

On behalf of Aston Business School (ABS), I would like to welcome you to the Research Degrees Programme (RDP) and also to Aston University.

In undertaking your research degree at Aston Business School, you are joining a vibrant and engaging research community of faculty and research students. ABS prides itself on providing a very exciting environment for research in business and management and we are delighted to welcome you to the School.

The Research Degrees Programme has a research student population of approximately 150 students. There are over 40 nationalities represented on the RDP with students undertaking cutting edge research which will have an impact on business globally. Research students not only belong to an academic group based on their research specialism but also belong to the wider RDP community of staff and students. This wider community provides an engaging, supportive, and encouraging network in which to undertake your research degree.

We hope that you find this environment conducive for doing your research and wish you a stimulating and satisfying research experience.

As with all handbooks, you may have questions that are not answered within these pages or you may need further information, in this eventuality please do not hesitate to contact members of the RDP team for further clarification.

Professor Samuel Aryee

Research Degrees Programme Director

4.1 Introduction to Aston Business School

4.1.1 Aston Business School Vision and Mission

Our Vision

- To be a world-class research-based business school and the best in Europe for employability and global mobility
- To be the most inspiring and innovative business school in Europe
- To be in the top three business schools in the UK

Our Balanced Mission

Our balanced mission has three equally important and integrated elements. These are learning and teaching, research and community engagement. Our mission is therefore as follows:

Learning and teaching: To provide inspirational and life-long learning for all our students and alumni so that they in turn offer effective and responsible leadership in their various organisations, communities and nations.

Research: To undertake rigorous research that answers the major questions facing business leaders, policy makers and practitioners nationally and internationally

Community engagement: To contribute through knowledge transfer, innovation and inspiration to the development and regeneration of our region and to the development of organisations and communities locally and globally.

Within Aston Business School: In order to fulfil our mission we are committed to building and sustaining a work community of excellent students and staff working in a supportive and motivating team-based environment that is a model of the organisational cultures we advocate.

Our Culture and Values

The following describe the core values of Aston Business School, based on consultation with our staff and consistent with the values of the wider university:

People: We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming atmosphere with approachable and supportive staff.

Performance: We endeavour to make an impact both locally and globally through our relevant research and teaching.

Innovation: We seek to be the most innovative, exciting and responsive business school in the UK.

Quality: We are consistent in our dedication to excellence in all areas.

Process: We endeavour to be a forward-thinking and socially responsible school with a commitment to equality and diversity.

4.1.2 Research Degrees Programme Mission

The Mission of the RDP is to be one of the leading providers of research education in the field of business and management. In doing so, the RDP aims to produce qualified graduates who are capable of making a significant contribution through their research both to the practice of management and the production of knowledge about it.

Research Degrees Programme Aims

The RDP achieves its mission by attracting suitably qualified applicants capable of doing cutting edge research in the field of management and business, and equipping them with the transferable skills for a career in research in education and in the public and private sectors. Thus you will be:

- Provided with adequate balance and rigor in postgraduate training and in modern theories of business and management.
- Equipped with appropriate tools and technical skills in business and management by means of a common core of generic training course modules.
- Given the opportunity to specialise in a particular field of management or business and carry-out a rigorous piece of original research in the area.
- Provided with adequate research training which will enable you to subsequently pursue careers in education, and the public and private sectors.

Research Degrees Programme Objectives

On completion of your degree, you will be able to:

- Identify and review the key literature in relation to a research topic and to offer a rigorous critique of underlying theories and related empirical results.
- Read and understand leading academic journals in their area.
- Construct a feasible research project to answer an identified specific research question and to develop and derive management and related models as appropriate, as well as derive useful results from such models.
- Demonstrate knowledge of the range of research methodologies and their applicability to your research questions.
- Demonstrate the ability to make an independent contribution to the furtherance of knowledge and to be able to defend that contribution, and complete the research thesis.
- Present your work in a number of forms, including conferences, journals, the classroom, and in your viva.
- Demonstrate competence in the range of skills demanded of an academic researcher in the field of management and business which would enhance your career in education, government/non-government departments, and/or commercial organisations.
- Demonstrate competence in a range of general and transferable skills, including general communication and presentation skills, practical knowledge and

understanding of electronic data processing applications, and the utilisation of appropriate software relevant for estimation in your area of specialisation.

- Make a decision about the future direction of your career in business, management, research and/or higher education.

4.2 Facilities

4.2.1 Doctoral Suite

Research Degrees Programme students have access to dedicated facilities in the Doctoral Suite on the 11th floor of the South Wing. Facilities are professional, spacious and include a dedicated conference-style lecture room, computer suite with 20 PCs, shared research student offices for final year students, and administrative offices for RDP staff. In addition to its study and teaching facilities, the Doctoral suite has a fully equipped kitchen, dining area, and a quiet reading space. This area provides a space where students can meet and relax. A selection of newspapers and journals are available and there are tea and coffee making facilities as well as a refrigerator, dishwasher and microwave oven in the kitchen area. **Please do your part to make sure these areas are kept clean.**

4.2.2 Allocation of Research Degrees Programme Desk Space

1. At a minimum you will be provided with hot-desking space during your time at Aston Business School. Any further provision is at the discretion of the RDP Director and subject to the availability of space at any one time.

2. All first year doctoral students will be allocated hot-desking space on 11th Floor, South Wing.

3. After the first year you will be allocated at a minimum hot-desking space on 11th Floor, South Wing or 7th Floor, South Wing.

4. There is some allocated desk space within shared offices on 11th Floor, South Wing and also 7th Floor, South Wing. This will be offered to final year students as priority by the RDP Director. No student has an absolute right to accommodation in these offices. (Second year students will only be allocated this space in exceptional circumstances.)

5. If space is available within an Academic Group's accommodation, you may be allocated such office space, but this is very limited and cannot be guaranteed.

6. The status of each doctoral student in terms of work space will be reviewed annually.

4.2.3 Access to the Doctoral Suite and Security Issues

Access to the Doctoral Suite is via a swipe card system which is activated by your student ID card, please ensure that this door remains closed at all times for your own safety and that of others.

Sadly, theft is a fact of life across the University. It is vital that you:

- Safeguard your valuables at all times
- Keep your room locked at all times when it is unoccupied
- Do not leave valuables in your room unattended or overnight

4.2.4 Student's Mail

Student mail trays are located on 11th floor South Wing and you are asked to check and clear your mail on a regular basis.

4.3 Research Areas and Groups

As a research student you will be linked with one of Aston Business School's six academic groups with supervisors drawn from one or more of them. The School's academic groups cover the core disciplines of management and commercial law and provide a rich intellectual community of academic faculty, research associates, industry partners and doctoral students.

The six academic groups are:

Economics & Strategy
The Economics & Strategy Group is a diverse academic group that covers a range of research areas including international business and organisational strategy with a combined interest in innovation and its impact on business.

Finance and Accounting
The individual expertise of the group members include empirical finance, corporate governance and constitutional change, their interests span the financial and accounting sectors. The pioneering research conducted within the group aims to influence policy and practice in the financial, government and law sectors.

Law
The location of Aston Law within the Business School has produced a natural research profile and activity in areas of law mostly directly relevant to the business community both in the UK and internationally.

Marketing
The Marketing group combines an interest in all Marketing specialities and through the highest standards of research, education and consultancy, its researchers are able to advance marketing knowledge on a global scale.

Operations and Management
The Operations & Information Management group regularly work with local businesses and blue-chip global clientele as well as UK and international government

bodies; helping them to understand, make and implement important decisions. Through ground-breaking research, teaching and training, the centre aims to promote the importance of effective decision-making to those working in extremely complex environments.

Work and Organisational Psychology
The Work & Organisational Psychology Group is an intellectually exciting, creative and productive international research group which advances the understanding of social processes, people management and organisational effectiveness.

4.4 Training

4.4.1 Research Methods Course

All RDP students undertake the taught Research Methods Course (RMC) as the foundation of their development as a professional researcher. The RMC first provides the essential grounding in skills necessary for research and then allows you to specialise in methods and techniques appropriate to your particular research project. The RMC comprises of 4 modules, taken over the first year for full-time students and for the first two years for part-time students.

The RMC is specially designed for research students and completion is **compulsory**. You will be formally assessed on the RMC and will be deemed to have completed the course on passing each module (see below). All the course modules within the RMC must be completed before you can proceed to register as a Doctoral student. This means that you will be registered for an unspecified degree in the first instance.

RMC Aims and Objectives

The aims of the Research Methods Course are as follows:

- To ensure that you develop an appreciation of the philosophical basis of the social science research paradigms and their applications within the field of management.
- To provide you with an appreciation of research design principles and the choices you make, as well as the strategies you can undertake for successful planning, executing and completion of research.
- To ensure you are aware of the range of qualitative and quantitative research techniques and methods that are available to the researcher scientist and the conditions under which they can be applied.
- To appreciate the limitations of formal methods of research enquiry and to provide the opportunity to deepen your knowledge and experience based on particular approaches.
- To ensure that you acquire competence in all the basic practical skills of the researcher (library searching, computing etc.) and that you understand the conditions under which they can be applied.

At the end of the programme, you should be able to:

- Demonstrate a good level of competence in a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods.
- Formally develop appropriate methods of research enquiry and identify the appropriate research method for investigation.
- Develop at an appropriate level, useful models and social and economic behaviour at a level appropriate to your background.
- Offer a useful critique of underlying theories and an awareness of both the theoretical and empirical problems that can arise in formal research.
- Understand and have the ability to apply the relevant software packages at an appropriate level.
- Demonstrate competence in a range of transferable skills.

RMC Course Structure

MODULE	DESCRIPTION	DATE TO BE HELD
RMC Module I: Basic Skills within the Management Research Process (Module Leader: Professor Sam Aryee)	To establish the foundation for future performances as well as to begin to build critical research skills (e.g. library searches, literature review, article analysis)	One week on campus course held at Aston, scheduled from Monday 3rd October 2011.
RMC II: The Philosophy of Management Research (Module Leader: TBA)	The module will look at the nature of knowledge, the logic of argument and the process by which new knowledge is created.	For full time students this module takes place on campus every week starting 10th October and runs over one term. For part time and distance learning students, the module starts week two of term one, runs over two terms, and is delivered via Blackboard, Aston's Virtual Leaning Environment.
RMC III: Qualitative and Quantitative Research Design and Analysis (Module Leaders: Drs Graham Leask & Judy Scully)	This module consists of 13 different workshops with alternate quantitative/qualitative concentration. A total of 7 workshops have to be completed with a possibility of taking more if desired.	For full time students this module takes place on campus every week starting week one of term two and runs over one term. For part time and distance learning students, the module starts week two of term two, runs over two terms, and is delivered via Blackboard.
RMC IV: Communication and Advanced Research Skills (Module Leader: Dr Olga Epitropaki)	The intent of this one week module is to provide the students with the basic skills required to communicate research findings to a broader audience, with a focus on peer reviewing, referred journals, media/material support and presentation skills.	One week on campus Course, held at Aston, scheduled from Monday 14 May 2012 for full time students and term three of the second year for part time students.

MODULE	END DATE	ASSIGNMENT DATE
RMC I	7th October 2011	F-T – 7th November 2011 P-T – 21st November 2011
RMC II	13th December 2011	F-T 30th January 2012 P-T 13th February 2012
RMC III	23rd March 2012	F-T 8th May 2012 P-T 21st May 2012
RMC IV	18th May 2012	F-T 25th June 2012 P-T 23rd July 2012
QR		F-T 30th July 2012 P-T TBA

RMC Assessment

All modules are assessed and **must be** successfully completed by participants before they can undertake their research project.

One hard copy and one e-version of each assignment must be submitted to the Programme Administrator by the appropriate date.

The pass rate is 50% for each module and assignments are graded as follows:

- Clear fail (39% or less)
- Marginal fail (a mark between 40 and 49%)
- Pass (a mark between 50 and 59%)
- Good pass (a mark between 60 and 69%)
- Distinction (a mark of 70% or more)

Marked assignments will be available for collection from the RDP Office about five weeks after the assignment deadline. The marks will be provisional until they are approved by the RDP Exam Board.

Supervisor's comments

Please show your assignments to your supervisor(s) for feedback well before the deadline. Your main supervisor is required to sign the “Module Assessment Sheet” (forms may be obtained from the RMC Blackboard Site or the PhD Programme Administrator) in order to confirm that he/she has read the assignment and given any comments, if appropriate. Alternatively, your supervisor can send a confirmation email to the RDP Administrator. Please make sure that the comment sheet/confirmation email reaches the RDP Administrator no later than the set submission deadline for the assignment.

Late or Non-Submission of Assessed Work

The absolute maximum amount of time that will be granted for an extension on an RMC assignment will be **one week**, there will be no exceptions.

If you need to request an extension due to exceptional circumstances, you must complete a Late Submission form and provide supporting documentation, such as a doctor's note, and agreement in writing from your supervisor. This must be completed before the original submission date. Forms may be obtained from the RDP office and must be completed and submitted by the official submission date. The decision to revise a deadline will be made by the RDP Director.

Extensions will not be granted in advance, and module tutors and students cannot agree individual extensions.

Failure to submit an assignment will result in a 'fail' mark.

Exemption from Modules

If you can provide written evidence that you have successfully completed an equivalent RMC during the last two years you can be exempted from the RMC. You may obtain credits towards all or part of RMC III by taking appropriate courses in your chosen methodology. These may be drawn from both internal and external sources. In order to obtain credit for such courses, you must first obtain the approval of your main supervisor and the RDP Director. The RDP Exam Board shall ratify all decisions associated with exemptions.

Please note that successful completion of the Research Methods Course is a requirement of the RDP at Aston.

Progression through the Programme

Any RMC assignment that is submitted late without approval from the late submissions panel will be given a mark of zero and failed. If an assignment is failed by the examiners, then you may be requested to resubmit the piece of work, or an alternative assignment as deemed appropriate, by the examiners. If the resubmission is subsequently failed, then the Exam Board will recommend termination of your registration and removal from the programme.

Module Feedback

Each RMC module is concluded with a 'RMC Questionnaire', which is an opportunity for you to give feedback on the delivered module. The questionnaire can be submitted to the RDP office or, if you wish it to remain confidential, you can send it directly to the Quality Coordinator Julie Green (j.e.green@aston.ac.uk).

Originality and Plagarism

All written work submitted for assessment should be your own. Original sources or secondary literature must be acknowledged when consulted. In addition, it is not legitimate to copy the work of fellow students, nor to permit them to copy yours.

Acknowledging sources means:

- Referring to each source, i.e., author's name(s), year of publication and page number(s) in your work at the point at which you are drawing upon information or views from that source.
- Providing full information about your sources in your bibliography.
- Using quotation marks whenever you are citing an author's views in his or her own terms.
- Acknowledging the source of any diagrams, tables or graphical representations of data that have been copied directly from a literature source.
- Please refer to http://www1.aston.ac.uk/current-students/ldc/studyguides/

Any student found to have "borrowed" from published work without acknowledgment or from another students' work may be awarded a fail mark for the work in question.

The University's Regulations for the Discipline of Students define Plagiarism and Collusion as follows:

Plagiarism *- a form of cheating in which a student uses, without acknowledgement, the intellectual work of other people and presents it as her or his own.*

Collusion *- where two or more people have worked together without permission to produce a piece of work which is then submitted for assessment as the work of only one person.*

Plagiarism is an offence against the University's Regulations and as such may be the subject of formal disciplinary proceedings.

4.4.2 MSc in Management Research (by Research)

This is a structured research degree allowing the student to undertake an important piece of research but within a more contained framework than in PhD/MPhil Degrees. Students share the RMC with doctoral students, take a postgraduate module from the selection of taught MSc modules, and submit a dissertation at the end of their research project. Further information can be obtained from the RDP team.

4.4.3 Research Methods Course by Distance Learning

As a distance learning student, you will study the Research Methods Course (RMC) modules without having to attend the entire course on campus. Distance learning students are required to attend two one-week residential elements of the RMC-one at the start of the first year and the other one in the third term either of year one or year two.

The remaining two modules are delivered online via the RMC Blackboard Site.

There is a Distance Learning Director for the Research Methods Course.

4.4.4 RMC and RDP Blackboard Sites

Blackboard is Aston's virtual learning tool and is central to the delivery of the RMC. RDP students will be able to gain RMC course information and materials and learn about RDP events on the Blackboard site.

You can log on to Blackboard via MAP or alternatively at http://bb.aston.ac.uk

Blackboard support is provided by the Blackboard team who can be contacted by email at bb8@aston.ac.uk .

4.4.5 Associate Certificate in Teaching and Learning

Those students who have been awarded a GTA are also required to undertake the Associate Certificate in Teaching and Learning in their first year. This is a teaching qualification that will enable you to become a certified professional teacher. Instructions for the Certificate are provided by the Centre for Staff and Graduate Development, Aston University. For further details go to: http://staffdev.aston.ac.uk/bookings/fullCourse.aspx?courseID=90

4.5 Recording Your Research Activities – UK/EU Students

As outlined for international students in section 3.5, UK/EU students will also be required to record their research activities on a monthly basis.

You will be invited to record your research activities via the University portal, MAP (My Aston Portal), each month by following a guided process. Once you have recorded your research activities for the relevant period (eg library induction, conference attendance, seminars, data collection) you will be able to submit them to your Supervisor through MAP, for his/her approval and/or comment. Your Supervisor will also indicate which of the activities, or what proportion of them, are eligible to contribute towards your skills training. Using MAP, you will be able to print out a list of all of the research activities you have recorded and a list of the approved skills training hours.

All research students will also be expected to record their meetings with their supervisors using the Record of Supervisory Meetings form. As outlined in section 2.1, the completed Meeting Forms from at least four formal meetings will need to be submitted with your Annual Progress Report. The aim of these reports is to help the RDP programme team to support students in their timely progression through the programme.

4.6 Contacts

During your studies at Aston Business School the Research Degrees Programme Team will provide you with both academic and administrative support. The members of the team are located in either the South Wing (SW) or in the Aston Business School Building (ABSb) see below:

RDP TEAM STAFF MEMBERS	***Room***	***Ext.***	***Email address @aston.ac.uk***
Associate Dean Research Professor Pawan Budhwar	SW8012	3049	p.s.budhwar
Director of Research Degrees Programme Professor Samuel Aryee	SW8017	3353	s.aryee
Director, DBA Programme Dr Graham Leask	SW1020b	3150	g.leask
Research Degrees Programme Manager Dr Liz Bridges	SW1101	4974	e.bridges
Research Programme Administrator (PhD/MSc) Ms Jeanette Ikuomola	SW1110	3219	rdp
Research Programme Assistant (PhD/MSc) Ms Irene Vickers	SW1110	3170	rdp
DBA Programme Administrator Mrs Ranjit Judge	SW1110	3354	dba

RESEARCH METHODS COURSE TUTORS	*Room*	*Ext.*	*Email address @aston.ac.uk*
RMC Module I Professor Samuel Aryee	SW8017	3353	s.aryee
RMC Module II Dr Andrew Farrell	ABS233	4874	a.m.farrell2
RMC Module III Dr Graham Leask Dr Judy Scully	SW1020b ABSb619	3150 3229	g.leask j.w.scully
RMC Module IV Dr Olga Epitropaki (contact via Jenny Thompson x 3257)	SW8002		o.epitropaki
Distance Learning Director TBA			

GROUP RESEARCH CONVENORS	*Room*	*Ext.*	*Email address @aston.ac.uk*
Finance & Accounting Professor Alan Lowe	ABSb422	3370	a.lowe
Law Dr James Brown	ABS428	3422	j.p.brown1
Marketing Dr. Dina Rasolofoarison	ABS242	4797	d.rasolofoarison
Operations & Information Management Dr Christopher Brewster	ABSb275	3233	c.a.brewster
Economics & Strategy Dr David Saal	SW909	3220	d.s.saal
Work & Organisational Psychology Dr Geoff Thomas	SW8021	3295	g.m.thomas

Research Degrees Programme Office

The RDP Office is located in the Doctoral Suite, South Wing Building, floor 11, room 1110, and is your first point of contact for all administrative queries, information, and the handling of assignments. Please note that the usual RDP office hours are Monday to Friday 9.30am until 4pm.

The RDP Manager, Liz Bridges, is also located in the Doctoral Suite in room SW1101 and can be contacted for advice and support.

Research Degrees Programme Director Office Hours

The Director of Research Degrees is Professor Samuel Aryee. He is located in room 8017, South Wing. You can make an appointment with Sam by using the booking sheet on his office door in the South Wing, or via e-mail to s.aryee@aston.ac.uk .

4.7 Other Key Information

4.7.1 Research Training Support Grant

All full time internal PhD students receive from the Business School an annual research training support grant of £350 per year. (This includes students receiving ESRC studentships who receive separate research funding from the ESRC). For part time internal students the grant is £175 per year. This grant is a contribution towards supporting your research costs. Amongst other things it can go towards research conference expenses and direct research costs.

4.7.2 Conference Funding

A limited amount of funds are available to support students whose papers have been accepted at an international conference. To apply you should submit an account of the projected budget for attendance at the conference to the programme administrator. **Please note that requests for conference funding must be made and agreed before expenditure is incurred.** The RDP Director will subsequently inform you of his decision. The maximum amount that a student can claim is £500 per year.

Process for making a claim
You will need to pass your receipts, invoices, letter of acceptance to the conference etc. to the Programme Administrator (room 1110) for processing. **Claims cannot be considered unless they are supported by receipts**. The closing date for claims to be received by the Finance Office is 31 July.

4.7.3 Opportunities to Present Your Research

Developing your own skills in order to present your research findings and to positively critique other people's work is an essential part of your development as a researcher. Consequently there will be a range of opportunities on the course and over the duration of your career at Aston for you to participate in research presentations both

as a contributor and a member of the audience. Whilst it is not a condition of your registration at Aston it is expected that you will avail yourself of as many of these sessions as possible. If nothing else they are excellent training for the ultimate defence of your research dissertation or thesis. A useful starting point would be to consult with your supervisor regarding seminars that are held within your Research Group. Otherwise you can consult your Research Group Convenor. Details of seminars are also advertised on the relevant notice board on the 11th Floor of South Wing.

Research in Progress Seminars

Once a year, in the summer term, research students within some research groups meet to present their work. These seminars are co-ordinated by each Research Group Convenor and are open to all Research Group members. Each participant has half an hour to present the current state of their research and to be questioned upon it. These sessions offer both an opportunity to get feedback upon recent progress and are part of the formal processes for monitoring your progress as a research student. Please contact your Research Group Convenor for further information.

West Midlands Doctoral Colloquium

The West Midlands Doctoral Colloquium is held in June each year. This is an opportunity for you to present your work to other students, receive feedback, and find out what other students are doing. It is organised by the Programme Director and requests for papers to be presented will be made during term two. All papers presented are eligible for the Director's Prize for the Best Paper presented at the colloquium. The colloquium is jointly run with the Aston and Birmingham Business Schools, all students are encouraged to attend.

4.7.4 Student Feedback

Student Representative Roles

At the beginning of the academic session in October each year research students are invited to volunteer to be a representative on a range of School and University committees, these include the ABS School Board, the ABS Research Committee, the University's Research Degrees Committee, and the Library and Information Services committee. The role of the student representative is to bring matters to the Committee and report back to the RDP students. Being a student representative provides a vehicle to communicate the research student view and is a great opportunity to help shape the future of research degrees at Aston University.

Open Forum

The Open Forum is a meeting held once each term between students on the Programme and the Director of Teaching and Learning. It provides a forum for students to raise any matters relating to the programme and the university. While it is a means of communication and feedback the forum does not have decision-making powers.

4.7.5 Admission to Beta Gamma Sigma Membership (BGS)

Aston Business School was accredited by The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) in 2003, and established a BGS Chapter in 2005.

Upon successful completion of your degree you will be invited to become a member of BGS. BGS membership is the highest recognition a business student can earn anywhere in the world and, once added to your Curriculum Vitae, it will help you stand out from the crowd. You can also enjoy a number of membership benefits including gaining access to Betanet (BGS website), a year's free subscription of Business Week, and access to the online job board.

5. University Resources and Information

5.1 The Advice & Representation Centre

ARC (the Advice and Representation Centre) is the Guild's independent representation service for Aston students.

ARC staff are able to represent students at formal hearings and appeals.

Visit the ARC for independent advice and support with:

- Academic appeals
- Access to Learning Fund applications & appeals
- Course related issues
- Disciplinary matters
- Exam boards
- Money advice
- Off campus accommodation
- University sanctions
- and more…

Location:
The ARC is located on the first floor of the Students' Guild

The Advice and Representation Centre is also the source of information about all non-campus accommodation available to Aston students via the web link at http://www.astonstudentpad.co.uk

Contact details:
Email: arc@aston.ac.uk
Telephone: 0121 204 4848
Web: http://www.astonguild.org.uk/advice

Opening Hours
Monday – Friday: 10am to 4pm

5.2 Central Teaching Operations

Central Teaching Operations are responsible for the allocation and booking (internal and external) of all University teaching/function rooms; and the management and co-ordination of support for teaching facilities. Student societies are able to make room bookings for society meetings through The Hub. **The Central Teaching Operations website provides more information on the services provided.**

5.3 The Hub - Student Support Services

The Hub brings together all Aston's key student support departments to ensure students can get answers to their most frequent queries without having to go from

one part of the University to another. The Hub has an Advice Zone and a Finance Zone.

Support departments accessed through The Hub **Advice Zone** include:

- Counselling Service
- Disability and Additional Needs Unit (DANU)
- International Student Advisers for immigration advice
- Registry
- Student Advisers (for advice about academic issues, academic finance, income tax and council tax, housing and money advice)
- Student Funds Administrator (for extra funding such as the Access to Learning Fund for UK students and the Susan Cadbury Fund for International and EU students).

The Hub Advice Zone is also the place to collect **University letters** pre-ordered on MAP.

The Hub **Finance Zone** is the place to pay accommodation fees and tuition fees.

Location:
The Hub is located on the ground floor of the Main Building on the east side of the upper foyer.

Contact details:
Email: thehub@aston.ac.uk
Telephone: 0121 204 4007

Opening Hours in the Advice Zone
Undergraduate Term-time: 9.30am to 5pm (10am to 5pm on Wednesdays)
Undergraduate Vacations: 10am to 4pm

5.3.1 Counselling Service

The University Counselling Service is a confidential and professional service, staffed by qualified and experienced counsellors.

Meeting with a counsellor offers the opportunity to discuss issues that may be affecting you either personally, or in your academic work. These could include issues such as relationship difficulties, anxiety and stress, loss of motivation. No topic is too small or too large to bring to the service and, each year, many students benefit from talking with a counsellor.

Counsellors do not give advice or tell you what to do. Our role is to help you take responsibility for your own decisions, to become more aware of your own resources and to work with you in developing skills which will help you to manage your own difficulties and concerns more effectively.

The service is situated on the ground floor of the Main Building. Appointments can be made through The Hub in person, by telephone: 0121 204 4007 or you can email

the Counselling Service on counselling@aston.ac.uk. Further information can also be found on the Service web site: www.aston.ac.uk/counselling

5.3.2 Credit Control (Finance)

Credit Control is responsible for collecting your tuition fee and/or accommodation fee payments and is also your main contact if you are having difficulties paying your fees. Call into The Hub Finance Zone on a 'drop in' basis to see a member of the Credit Control team who will be pleased to discuss and sort out any queries you may have or, if you prefer, you can book an appointment. There are confidential interview rooms if you would like to talk to someone in private. Where appropriate we will liaise with staff in your School to help resolve your queries.

For more information see the student finance website either through New Students Finance Information Website link or through the Current Student link Current Students Finance Information Website.

Contact details:
Email: Creditcontrol@aston.ac.uk
Telephone: 0121 204 4355

You can also pay online by clicking on: www.aston.ac.uk/payments

If you have any queries about the amount of fee you are being charged, please contact:

Tuition Fees Charges
In Person: Visit The Hub Advice Zone
Email: registry@aston.ac.uk
Telephone: 0121 204 4689

Accommodation Fees Charges
In Person: Visit the Accommodation Office –
Ground Floor, Stafford Tower
Email: accom@aston.ac.uk
Telephone: 0121 204 4704/4707

5.3.3 The Disability and Additional Needs Unit (DANU)

DANU provides advice and guidance if you have a disability. They can help to co-ordinate any support you require if you have a physical, sensory or hidden disability, mental health or specific learning difficulty. The service is confidential and we will only liaise with teaching and other support staff within the University to help make adjustments which support your studies if you give us permission to do so, although the support we can offer may be limited if you do not want your School to know about your disability.

We also:

- run a personal assistance scheme which employs support workers to assist you if you require extra assistance with study-related tasks;

- assist you with applications for the Disabled Students' Allowance (DSA) and other sources of funding;
- advise teaching areas about the provision of individual examination arrangements and course adaptations (with your consent);
- make arrangements for Personal Evacuation Plans;
- provide screening for dyslexia and make referrals to educational psychologists for full diagnostic assessments if you think you may have specific learning difficulties and would like help with this;
- can help provide assistive technology support and advice through the Assistive Technology Officer.

Contact details:
Email: danu@aston.ac.uk
Telephone: 0121 204 4007
Web: www1.aston.ac.uk/disability/

5.3.4 International Student Advisers

The University has specialist International Advisers to assist you with a range of issues including immigration advice about student visas and work permits, cultural and social activities and English language support sessions.

They also organise the Aston Welcome Weeks, designed to help you settle into your new environment and make you feel more at home.

Contact details:
Email: issu@aston.ac.uk
Telephone: +44 121 204 4567
Web: www1.aston.ac.uk/current-students/studentsupport/issu/

5.3.5 Registry

Registry provides a range of administrative support services for students throughout your time at Aston, from initial application to graduation. We also administer some of the University's academic and disciplinary rules and regulations.

The Registry's Student Records section is responsible for all student records from initial enrolment through to graduation. The Student Records webpage provides more detailed information on the services provided, which include: enrolment, tuition fee invoices, contact with student sponsors, and issue of degree certificates.

Registry is responsible for the administration and application of many of the University's rules, regulations and procedures. Detailed information on these is available via the Registry's Regulations and Policies Page (http://www1.aston.ac.uk/registry/for-staff/regsandpolicies/), including the following important areas:

- Research Regulations, Procedures and Codes of Practice
- Academic Appeals Procedures
- Student Complaints Procedures
- Disciplinary Regulations for Students

5.4 The Students' JobShop

The Students' JobShop provides a wide range of reliable part-time term time and full-time vacation employment to Aston's students. This allows you to combine your academic career with some paid employment.

Working part-time will not only help you financially, but will also improve your employability skills, making you more employable.

A one-to-one advice and guidance service is available to help you compile CVs (resumés) for part-time employment, assistance with interview techniques, guidance on employment law and help with job searches.

Contact details:
Email: jobshop@aston.ac.uk
Telephone: 0121 204 4844
Web: http://www.astonguild.org.uk/jobshop
Address: First floor, Aston Students' Guild, Aston Triangle, Birmingham B4 7ES.

Opening Hours
Monday – Friday: 10am to 4pm

5.5 Training and Development

Your School will provide a range of training and development opportunities, the outline of which is detailed in Section 3.4 above. In addition, the University offers a wide range of other opportunities delivered by a number of central services which have specific expertise and experience in the areas that they cover. These Departments coordinate their activities through a Graduate Development Team which comprises:

- Business Partnership Unit
- Careers and Employability Centre
- Centre for Staff and Graduate Development (which has an overview role)
- Learning Development Centre
- Library and Information Services
- Research Support Office

The training courses that these Departments offer cover a broad range of generic skills that support your ability to succeed on your programme and skills that will prepare you for future employment. The course provision is mapped against a new national Researcher Development Statement (see Appendix 5 for details) and in broad terms the courses cover:

- Research Methods
- Research Skills
- Personal Skills and Effectiveness
- Professional and Career Development Skills

- Working with Others
- Teaching
- Communication Skills
- Business Skills

Further details of the Graduate Development Team, the Researcher Development Framework and the course provision can be found at www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/graduateschool/contact. Access to these courses is an inclusive part of your learning experience at Aston, and we encourage you to talk to your Supervisor about which courses you should do and how you can schedule them over your period of research. Booking onto courses is easy – just go to http://staffdev.aston.ac.uk/bookings and select the Category 'Supporting Research (courses for PhD students)'.

In addition to the courses, each Department in the Graduate Development Team offers other opportunities that are more personalised and often one-to-one. Please refer to each Department's website which can be accessed directly, or through www.aston.ac.uk/current-students/graduateschool/contact.

5.6 Academic Malpractice

The Regulations on Student Discipline include the following examples of academic malpractice. If an allegation of academic malpractice is brought against a student, the student will be subject to disciplinary proceedings; the penalties which may be applied when an allegation is found to be proven are detailed in the Regulations on Student Discipline:

Plagiarism is a form of cheating in which a student uses, without acknowledgement, the intellectual work of other people and presents it as his or her own. It includes copying passages, sentences or even phrases from other work, without quotation marks. It also includes presenting the ideas or arguments of others as your own, i.e. without acknowledging the source. Please note that this applies to material retrieved from the internet as well as books, journals and periodicals. It applies even if you have paraphrased (changed the wording), or taken ideas from another student, or any unpublished material. If you are in any doubt about how to acknowledge your sources and reference correctly, seek advice from your Supervisor.

Collusion is where two or more students have worked together to produce a piece of work which is then submitted for assessment as the work of only one of the students.

Fabrication of data and the deliberate augmenting, amending or omission of data, with the intention to deceive, is another form of cheating. It is the responsibility of the student to maintain the integrity of the data at all stages of the research. If data are excluded from analysis for any reason, if hypothetical data are discussed at any point, or if any corrections are applied to data, then this must be made explicit. Students must retain raw data and evidence of informed consent by participants, where appropriate.

5.7 Equality and Diversity

Aston University undertakes to promote equality and diversity within the University Community in all aspects of its work. It aims to ensure through its admissions policies for students and its recruitment and selection processes for staff that it encourages applications from all groups represented in the wider community at a local, national and international level. The University will endeavour not to discriminate unfairly or illegally, directly or indirectly, against students or potential students, staff or potential staff. This commitment applies to all functions of the University and to any stage of an individual's career at Aston.
The Equality and Diversity Policy Statement, the Equal Opportunities Policy for Students and a number of other policies relevant to equalities can be found on the Equality and Diversity website at: http://www.aston.ac.uk/staff/hr/equalops/

The University promotes a culture that supports and encourages dignity and respect between all members of the University Community. There is a *Dignity at Aston Policy* which aims to prevent harassment, bullying, intimidation and violence at work and study. If you have any concerns that you are being treated in a way that contravenes our policy you can make an appointment with a Dignity at Work and Study contact by telephoning the confidential hotline on (0121 204) 5454. Further information about how to get help can be found at:
http://www.aston.ac.uk/staff/hr/equalops/advice/Harassment.jsp

The University also has policies relating to a number of specific equality issues, including disability (see DANU), sexual orientation and religion and belief. The Code of Practice on Religion and Belief sets out the circumstances under which arrangements may be made to enable students to observe your own religious festivals. You should read this carefully since you have a responsibility to inform staff about any requirements or requests you may have, for example, in relation to examination dates. The Code of Practice on Religion and Belief can be found at: http://www.aston.ac.uk/staff/hr/equalops/policies/Religion_Belief.jsp

The University's Equality and Diversity Unit offers a service to both students and staff.
If you have any questions about equality and diversity at the University or you would like advice and guidance on any matter to do with equality of opportunity please contact the Equality and Diversity Unit on extension 4580 or by email at: k.parsons@aston.ac.uk

5.8 Quality Management: What it is and how to play your part

At the end of each research year, Supervisors must submit an Annual Progress Report on the performance of each of their research students, in consultation with the student. These Reports are considered by the Associate Dean Research on behalf of the School's Research Committee and issues arising may form part of the School's Annual Monitoring Report on Research which is subsequently considered by the University's Graduate School Management Committee.

Aside from maintaining regular contact with your Supervisor and recording the outcomes of your meetings, your input will also be extremely valuable for evaluation purposes.

Course Evaluation
Teaching staff welcome constructive feedback on workshops and seminars. Your input may be sought through questionnaires, representation on various committees or by asking you to take part in group evaluation exercises.

Postgraduate representatives play an important part in relaying the requirements and concerns of postgraduate students to the committee structure of the School and of the University. There are postgraduate representatives on School Research Committees and on the University's Graduate School Management Committee.

As a postgraduate representative, you are asked to:

- make yourself known to all other postgraduate students
- agree a system by which students can communicate effectively with you over matters of student concern
- attend relevant Committee meetings and raise student issues as necessary
- feed back to other postgraduate students the content and outcome of meetings and discussions.

5.9 Important University Documents

For all important University documents please go to the following links on the website: http://www1.aston.ac.uk/new-students/regsandpolicies/
http://www1.aston.ac.uk/current-students/graduateschool

5.10 Information Systems Aston (ISA)

Aston has extensive ICT facilities with more than 1500 student desktop computers which are located in over 50 separate computer labs across the campus.

Many labs can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and offer a range of networked software packages, database systems, modelling tools, computer-aided learning materials and access to online sources of information for research.

ICT facilities are free to students and are linked by our Local Area Network, which spans the campus and provides high speed access to other networks worldwide. An extensive wireless network is also available for students wishing to use their own computing equipment.

To help you use the ICT facilities available, ISA have created a Student Computer Guide which contains information on all of the services provided including email, My Aston Portal (MAP), Virtual Learning Environments and much more. You can view the guide online at http://www1.aston.ac.uk/ict/studentguide.

Contact details for ISA Helpdesk:

Email:	isa_helpdesk@aston.ac.uk
Telephone:	0121 204 3445
Location:	Main Building, East 477

5.11 JS Campus Bookshop

Academic and Professional Bookseller of the Year 2006-2011

- All core textbooks stocked
- Our database of over 2 million books can quickly identify your needs
- Fast personal order service
- Online ordering when we're closed
- Secondhand textbooks bought and sold
- Stationery and computer consumables at competitive prices
- Reading lists service for lecturers and students
- Special offers and discounts available
- Competitive with online retailers

Open Monday – Friday 9am-5.00pm

Contact details:

Email:	as@johnsmith.co.uk
Telephone:	0121 333 3361
Fax:	0121 333 5142
Web:	www.jscampus.co.uk
Location:	1st Floor, Aston Students' Guild

5.12 Library & Information Services

OPEN 24/6 WHEN IT MATTERS

Aston University Library & Information Services is one of only a handful of UK university libraries to have achieved the government standard in Customer Service Excellence. This means the service is customer focused with friendly, knowledgeable and professional staff and a prompt and effective response to any issues and concerns you may have during your time at Aston.

The newly refurbished building provides a welcoming and varied study environment designed to meet your needs.

Membership

You automatically become a member of the Library at enrolment. The barcode on your uniCARD shows your Library membership number. You will need your uniCARD to enter the Library and to take books out.

Access to resources

From the web page http://www1.aston.ac.uk/lis/ you can:

- link to the Library catalogue to look for books, reserve books, and check your library record;
- go to Aston e-Library to access databases, e-journals and e-books;
- visit Library Matters on Blackboard for online support and advice on using Library resources.

Use MARs (My Aston Resources), a single access point for discovering books, journals and e-resources for your subject.

Getting help
Staff can help with general queries relating to your loans or fines. They can also give advice on finding books, journals and all sorts of information. Please speak to staff at the Help desk or contact the Library. For detailed queries you may be referred to one of our Information Specialists.

Contact details:

Email:	library@aston.ac.uk
Telephone:	0121 204 4525
Fax:	0121 204 4530
Web:	http://www.aston.ac.uk/lis/usinglibrary/helpandenquiries

Find out more
Use the web site http://www1.aston.ac.uk/lis/ to find out more about facilities, opening hours and regulations.

Other Libraries

For information on using other libraries, either in Birmingham or nearer home or work, please visit: http://www1.aston.ac.uk/lis/usingotherlibs/

5.13 Sports and Recreational Facilities

Venue	Opening Hours	Contact
Sport Aston Gym	07:00-22:30 Mon-Fri 09:30-18:30 Sat & Sun	Tel. 0121 204 4623
Woodcock Sports Centre	09:30-22:30 Mon-Fri 09:30-18:30 Sat & Sun	Tel : 0121 204 4623
Woodcock Swimming Pool	07:00-09:00 & 12:00-19:00 Mon-Fri	Tel : 0121 204 4623
Gem Sports Centre	11:30-22:30 Mon-Fri 09:30-17:30 Sat & Sun	Tel. 0121 204 4626
Aston Student Village and Gosta Green Pitch	10:00-22:00 Mon-Fri 10:00-17:00 Sat & Sun	Tel. 0121 204 4626
The Recreation Centre	09:30-12:30 / 17:30-21:00	Tel. 0121 358 4564

Sport Aston Gym at Woodcock Sports Centre

- 120+ station gym
- Brand new ‘Life Fitness’ equipment
- Supervised gym at all times by qualified gym instructors
- Light, spacious gym floor

Excellent range of fitness equipment:

- Cardiovascular machines - bikes, treadmills, rowers and cross-trainers
- Fixed resistance for upper and lower body training
- Free weights including Olympic benches, dumbbells and Smith machines
- Suitable for all users and fitness levels

Student memberships available:

- Academic year memberships
- 3 month memberships
- 12 month memberships
- ‘Gold’, ‘Silver’ & ‘Bronze’ memberships available to include Gym, Swim and Aerobics classes

All academic memberships the equivalent of under £5 per week!

Swimming Pool at Woodcock Sports Centre

- Beautiful and historic 25m pool
- Laned swimming at all times
- New changing facilities

Students can access the pool by:

- ‘Pay as you go’
- Academic year memberships
- 3 month memberships
- 12 month memberships
- ‘12 swims for the price of 10’ cards

Memberships can be upgraded to include our superb new Sauna and Steam Room.

Woodcock Sports Centre Hall & Dance Studios

Available for:

- Badminton
- Basketball
- Netball
- Volleyball
- Aerobics and Yoga
- Table Tennis (available in aerobics studio)

Bookings can be made up to 8 days in advance.

Aerobics & Yoga available at the new 2 storey Dance and Martial Arts Studio.

A range of classes is available throughout term-time to suit all levels of fitness and experience.

Aerobics classes include:

- Zumba
- Body Energize
- Aqua Aerobics
- Thighs, Tums & Bums
- Total Tone / Fit Mix
- Studio Cycling

Yoga classes include:

- Dynamic Yoga
- Pilates
- Yogalates
- Hatha Yoga
- Ashtanga Yoga

Please check out our website or the notice boards for specific timetables each term and during vacations.

Gem Sports Hall

Available for:

- Badminton
- Basketball
- Netball
- Volleyball
- Indoor Cricket Nets
- Table Tennis (available in aerobics studio)
- 2 Squash Courts also available for Squash or Racquetball

Bookings can be made up to 8 days in advance.

Aston Student Village & Gosta Green Pitches

The new Aston Student Village Pitch: three 5-a-side pitches or one 8-a-side pitch located in the heart of the campus. 3G pitch suitable for Football and Hockey training.

Gosta Green Custom Built 3G 5-a-side Football pitch located on campus.

Bookings can be made up to 8 days in advance.

Outdoor Recreation Centre

Located 8 miles away in Great Barr, our Outdoor Recreation centre is a 48 acre site and is home to many of our outdoor sports teams. Facilities include:

- Football Pitches
- Rugby Pitches
- Cricket Square
- Bar & Pavilion
- Changing Facilities
- **Ample Parking**

Find out more from the website: www.aston.ac.uk/recreationcentre

For more information about any of our sports or facilities please go to our website: www.aston.ac.uk/sport or email sportsenquiries@aston.ac.uk

6. Student Resources

6.1 Work Space

All students in the School can expect to have their own work space and access to computing resources reserved for their use. The allocation of this space is the responsibility of your School.

6.2 Photocopying

The School normally provides photocopying facilities for research use free of charge. Please contact your Supervisor or Research Administrator for details of where to find the best photocopier to use and restrictions on its use.

6.3 Laboratory Records and Intellectual Property (IP)

Note that, generally, Research Councils require that primary research data be stored for a period of ten years. In any case, you should maintain a working log book of your work, irrespective of whether you are involved in laboratory or desk-based research, and you should ensure you get into the habit of making your records as complete as possible. The log book is useful even if your primary method of storing your work is computer based.

Your log book should be periodically signed and dated by someone else, ideally an academic not directly connected with your research project.

Your original work in your log book would be the primary claim of priority in any dispute regarding patenting or Intellectual Property (IP) issues and, if a patent is filed, the laboratory records will potentially be required for 20+ years. As a research student, you should be aware of IP issues, including the University's IP Policy. If you wish to discuss the implications of IP for your research, you should do so with your Supervisor in the first instance.

6.4 Communication

All postgraduate students should have access to e-mail, telephone and fax facilities for University business. All formal university correspondence will be sent to your Aston e-mail address. You can get details of fax facilities from your School Research Administrator.

Personal phone calls may be made via the switchboard and are billed to the individual. A limited stationery supply is available for research use. Again, contact your local Research Administrator for details. Telephone support is provided by contacting telephones@aston.ac.uk.

6.5 Conference Travel

The discussion and planning of conference attendance should form part of your personal development plan. Specific advice can be obtained from your Supervisor. Authorisation to attend must be obtained before you travel. See your School Research Administrator for the forms that need to be completed prior to travel. You will need to discuss the financial details of attending external meetings with your Supervisor. Some of you will have access to project funds, some of you will need your Subject Group or your Supervisors' own account to provide the funds.

6.5.1 Travel Insurance

Aston employees, students and other non-employees travelling on the business of Aston University who travel outside of the UK are covered by Aston University travel insurance. When you travel you should always take a copy of the current insurance confirmation letter. For a copy please visit http://www1.aston.ac.uk/staff/finance/insurance/travel-insurance/. This also provides the details of current cover.

This letter will act as confirmation to any third party that you hold the necessary travel insurance, for example, when making Visa applications, medical emergencies, lost luggage etc. The letter contains an emergency 24/7 telephone number (+44 (0)20 7173 7797) where advice re any travel emergency, eg lost passport, medical emergency etc can be obtained. The letter should be retained separate from your main luggage, in case of loss, in order to allow you to more easily obtain assistance.

Also available is an emergency card and card carrier. These provide details of the emergency telephone number and a website to access travel advice re the countries you are to visit. The website address is www.aonprotectassistance.com. To access this site you may be required to key an access code, this is the last four digits of the emergency telephone number.

To ensure insurance cover is in place please ensure you complete the procedure for international travel which can be found at www1.aston.ac.uk/staff/hr/policy-procedures/other/international-travel/.

Operative time of cover – All business trips, including incidental holidays, outside the United Kingdom.

Definition of United Kingdom - shall mean England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (excluding Channel Islands and the Isle of Man).

Note any worldwide trips to areas deemed hazardous by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office must be declared to Insurers in advance of the trip. Cover will not apply automatically. Areas are listed on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website (www.fco.gov.uk) under travel advice for countries.

Medical Exclusions – the current policy does not require declaration of pre existing medical conditions. It does require individuals who are undergoing current treatment or have a specific health concern to seek the advice of a Qualified Medical Practitioner as to whether they are advisable to travel. The policy will exclude expense claims for a journey undertaken against the advice of a Qualified Medical Practitioner or for the purpose of seeking medical advice or treatment.

Medical Expenses/Personal Baggage/Money/Business Equipment excess is Nil.

Age Exclusion – Persons under 16 and over 75/85years of age. (Over 75 years the exclusion limits payment of certain benefits which are usually weekly paid and any one life cover to £100,000. Persons over 85 years of age are excluded from all cover)

This insurance excludes students travelling abroad on Placement. For details of insurance arrangements for these students, contact should be made with the individual School Placement Officers.

For a full definition of exact cover, queries or amendments to cover refer to:

A P Hawkesworth, Risk and Insurance Officer
Telephone: 0121 204 4387,
Email: a.p.hawkesworth@aston.ac.uk

6.6 Ethical Approval

All research students should take the time to reflect on the ethical implications of their research. As a general rule, if you undertake any research involving human participants then you may require ethical approval from the University. There is useful information about the ethical approval process online at: http://www1.aston.ac.uk/registry/for-staff/regsandpolicies/ethics-policy-and-procedures/

For further information, please contact your Supervisor or the Research Administrator in the School Office.

6.7 Data Protection

If you are running experiments involving data about human participants, you will need to be aware of the provisions of the Data Protection Act, 1998. More information is available on the website at: http://www1.aston.ac.uk/registry/for-staff/regsandpolicies/data-protection-policy-and-procedures/; a paper copy of the University's Guidelines for Data Users is available from the School Research Office. This covers such issues as what kinds of data may be kept, how it is stored, and the participants' access to data about themselves.

7. Health & Safety

All new postgraduates are given a copy of the Health and Safety Policy Document at enrolment when a School-wide talk on Health and Safety Issues takes place.

7.1 First Aid & Accidents

For minor accidents during office hours (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm), contact your local First Aid Officer for assistance in the first instance. S/he should have been made known to you at your local Health & Safety induction.

Alternatively, if medical help is required inside normal working hours and the person is mobile, you can visit the Health Centre drop-in centre. The drop-in centre is in the basement of Boots the Chemist, which is situated on the High Street in the centre of Birmingham (see Section 8.1 Other Useful Contacts for contact details).

If the person is not mobile, if movement could worsen the condition or if they are unconscious, contact Security immediately on emergency extension 222 (internal), 2222 (from Residences) or 0121 359 2922 (external, including from a mobile). Notify them of the location of the ill/injured person, the nature of the illness/injury, and the extension number of the nearest internal telephone. The Security team will provide first aid assistance and contact the ambulance service for you, if required. All accidents must be reported on a University Accident & Incident Report Form which can be downloaded from the Safety Office webpages.

7.2 Security/Working Out of Hours

In general, it should not be necessary to work out of hours and you are strongly encouraged to work within the normal University day (8.00am-6.00pm). If, however, you need to work out of hours in the Main Building, you must use your uniCARD to gain access via the 'Out of Normal Hours' Entrance – this is off Potter Street. The times when your uniCARD will have to be used to gain entry will be as follows:

Monday-Friday	8pm-6am
Saturday	1pm until Monday 6am

There will be other times that the Building will be closed (Bank Holidays, etc) and these will be notified in advance.

Please remember to wear your uniCARD.

7.3 Working Alone

Postgraduate students may undertake office or laboratory computer work alone as long as (out of hours) the University's Guidance on Lone Working is followed. Students must not work alone on any procedures involving risk of harm. If in doubt, check with your academic Supervisor.

7.4 Fire safety

Smoking is not allowed anywhere within any Aston Building.

The Main Building features a two-stage fire alarm system. Stage one is an intermittent siren signalling that a fire has been detected and to prepare for evacuation. A continuous siren indicates the need to evacuate immediately. **The lifts must not be used for evacuating the building**.

All Fire Exits – that is, those doors with a push bar or glass bolt, are fitted with alarms – **use of these doors at any time will set off the alarms which also register in the central University security point in the foyer of the main building.**

For **Emergency use** only – you will notice that there are door release buttons close to the magnetic locks on the doors. Use of this mechanism will also activate the alarm.

The Fire Safety Procedures can be found on the University Safety Office's website.

7.5 Recharging of Personal Electrical Equipment

It is a requirement in the University that any personal electrical items have a valid electrical safety certificate. Therefore, any personal device, eg mobile phone charger, PDA, must be safety tested before being plugged in. In addition, portable electrical equipment must be visually inspected prior to use and defective equipment must be withdrawn from use immediately.

8. Further Information

8.1 Other Useful Contacts

	WHERE ARE THEY?	HOW CAN I CONTACT THEM?
Chaplaincy	Martin Luther King Multi Faith Chaplaincy Accommodation Block B (opposite the library)	Extension 4276 **chaplaincy@aston.ac.uk** Chaplaincy website
Dentist	Vision Sciences Building	Extension 4310
Medical Centre	Halcyon Medical	Halcyon Medical contact details: 0845 072 4632

	(Boots - lower ground floor) 67-69 High Street Birmingham B4 7TA Satellite Clinic: G17 Main Building Monday-Friday: 10.30am - 3.30pm	halcyonmedical@nhs.net www.halcyonmedical.co.uk Medical Centre website
Security	Main Building, Reception	Extension 4803 (Emergency Extension 4222)

8.2 Car Parking

The University does not provide student car parking, except in very exceptional circumstances for welfare or medical grounds. If you feel you have a case to be considered, please contact The Hub in the Main Building or email thehub@aston.ac.uk.

8.3 Mobile Phones and Pagers

The use of mobile phones and pagers is NOT ALLOWED in any examination, lecture, practical class or clinic. You should ensure that they are switched off.

Appendix 1: Code of Practice for Research Degrees

To Follow

Appendix 2: Learning Agreement

ASTON UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL

POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREES

LEARNING AGREEMENT

1. Introduction

This document forms an Agreement between a student and their Supervisor, setting out agreed responsibilities of each party. This document is intended to be personal to the relationship between a student and Supervisor and, as such, should be amended to the satisfaction of both. This should be done within one month of the student's start date at a meeting involving the Supervisor, the student and any Associate Supervisor(s). Once completed, a copy should be submitted to the School Research Office.

2. Student Details

Student's Name:	
Research Group:	
Research Start Date:	*1 October / 1 January / 1 April / 1 July* Year: _____
Type of Registration:	*Full-time / Part-time*
Degree aimed for:	*MPhil / PhD / DBA / Professional Doctorate*
Supervisor:	*(include name, email address, phone number and office location)*
External Contact (if appropriate):	*(include contact details)*
✞Advisor (if appointed):	
*Associate Supervisor(s) (if appointed):	*(include email address, phone number and office location)*
**Associate Director of Research for Research Area:	*(include email address and phone number)*
~Postgraduate Tutor:	*(include name, email address, phone number and office location)*
Skills Training hours:	*60 / 90 / Exempt / Other* _____

✞ An Advisor to the Supervisor will be appointed by the Associate Dean Research where appropriate. If appointed, the Advisor will also attend the *viva voce* examination of the student's Qualifying Report.

* The role of any Associate Supervisor in the supervision of the student should be clarified at this meeting.

** The Associate Director of Research may be approached for academic advice and support in the absence or unavailability of the Supervisor.

~ The Postgraduate Tutor is a source of independent advice if the student/Supervisor relationship is not working well.

3. Research Aims and Objectives

a. Synopsis of research project and overall aims

b. Objectives of research project for first year (full-time students) or first two years (part-time students), including: literature review; experiments; laboratory practices; laboratory books.

4. Ownership

Discussion of the ownership of any work which the student undertakes.

Note:

Intellectual Property is the term given to outputs of intellectual and creative endeavour capable of protection under legislation such as that relating to patents, trade-marks, designs or copyright. The University has an IP Policy dealing with intellectual property created whilst you are a student at the University. Intellectual property created as part of your research as a research student will be owned by the University. Where possible, the University will seek to exploit Intellectual Property and will share any net income with staff and students in accordance with a scheme approved by the University Council. If you are involved in any new discovery you should notify your Aston Supervisor and must not publicise the discovery to anyone, anywhere in the world, in any way until any required legal protection is in place. Potential patent rights are prejudiced by non-confidential disclosure of a discovery prior to filing a patent application.

NB: this 'Note' is applicable to research students only; the position is slightly different for students on taught programmes.

5. Extract from the University's Code of Practice for Research Degrees (REG/08/385(1)), with further clarification/information (in italics) specific to the School (if appropriate))

5.1 Responsibilities of supervisors

The responsibilities of Supervisors include:

(a) providing satisfactory guidance and advice, and giving consideration to the appointment of Associate Supervisor(s) where this may be beneficial

(b) being responsible for monitoring the student's progress

(c) establishing and maintaining regular contact, at a frequency agreed with the student, and which should include structured interactions at least every 3 months to report, discuss and agree progress (Regulation 8.1)

(d) ensuring his/her reasonable accessibility to the student when s/he needs advice

(e) having input into the assessment of a student's development needs and regularly reviewing and amending those needs and advising students on their personal development planning

(f) providing timely, constructive and effective feedback on the student's work including his/her overall progress

(g) ensuring that the student is aware of the need to conduct his/her research according to ethical principles, respecting any issues of confidentiality, and of the implications of research misconduct (which are set out in detail in the University's Code of Practice for Dealing with Allegations of Research Misconduct, REG/04/77)

(h) providing effective pastoral support and/or referring the student to other sources of such support

(i) helping the student to interact with others working in the field of research, for example, by encouraging the student to attend relevant conferences, supporting him/her in seeking funding for such events; and where appropriate to submit conference papers and articles to refereed journals.

5.2 Responsibilities of research students

Students are responsible for the content, completion and submission for examination of their theses within the periods of study as prescribed in regulations for their particular degrees.

Students are also responsible for:

(a) taking responsibility for their own personal and professional development and attending induction programmes as advised by their Supervisor

(b) ensuring that they are familiar with and comply with University regulations and School guidelines and procedures relating to their degree, relevant Codes of Practice and other University and School requirements, health and safety advice, the monitoring of progress and terms of any sponsorship

(c) setting and keeping to timetables and deadlines, including planning and submitting work as and when required and generally maintaining satisfactory progress with the programme of research

(d) ensuring that in every year of enrolment they meet all of the University's requirements regarding administrative arrangements; for example, completing enrolment, re-enrolment and annual reports on progress

(e) discussing with their Supervisor the type of guidance and feedback they find most helpful, and agreeing a schedule of meetings

(f) initiating supervisory meetings where necessary

(g) in conjunction with their Supervisor, identifying their training needs and attending research training

(h) deciding when to submit their thesis (after the minimum period of study and before the end of the maximum period of study specified in the regulations), taking account of the Supervisor's opinion

(i) ensuring that they understand the nature of their Supervisor's responsibilities (see section 5.1 above)

(j) advising their Supervisors of any illness, holidays or any other occasions when they will be absent from the University or from their study, or of any other circumstances likely to affect their work.

6. Documentation and Other Useful Information

Discussion of relevant documentation and other useful information, as detailed below, and confirmation that the student has, or knows how to access, further details:

- ☐ Code of Practice for Research Degrees, including Research Code of Conduct appendix *(available on the intranet at http://www1.aston.ac.uk/registry/for-staff/regsandpolicies/researchregulationsandprocedures/)*
- ☐ General Regulations for Degrees by Research and Thesis *((available on the intranet at http://www1.aston.ac.uk/registry/for-staff/regsandpolicies/researchregulationsandprocedures/)*
- ☐ Special Regulations for the programme (if applicable)
- ☐ Record of Supervisory Meeting Form *(In Student Handbook)*
- ☐ Guide to Requirements for the Qualifying Report *(In Student Handbook)*
- ☐ School Health and Safety Policy Document
- ☐ Health and Safety information specific to student's research environment (if relevant)
- ☐ Academic Appeals Procedure *(available on the intranet at http://www1.aston.ac.uk/registry/for-staff/regsandpolicies/researchregulationsandprocedures/)*
- ☐ Student Complaints Procedure *(available on the intranet at http://www1.aston.ac.uk/registry/for-staff/regsandpolicies/researchregulationsandprocedures/)*
- ☐ Mentoring Programme *(In Student Handbook)*

7. Skills Training

All students must normally attend:

- a health and safety course as soon as possible after enrolment;
- a teaching skills course prior to undertaking any teaching or demonstrating in the School (sessions on teaching and assessment are offered via the School's postgraduate training programme or the Centre for Staff Development).

The student and Supervisor should discuss other courses/seminars/conference sessions to be attended to meet the professional and personal development needs of the student and contribute towards the regulatory requirement to undertake appropriate skills training during the research programme (60 hours for MPhil/90 hours for PhD).

The choice of the remaining training to be undertaken should be agreed between the Supervisor and the student, noting that not all of the hours need to be agreed at the initial meeting and that the student's development needs should be reviewed at least annually. A Training Needs Analysis form is appended to this Agreement to aid the discussion and to record decisions. The training and development activities that can count towards the skills training hours are:

- Internal courses and workshops offered by Departments represented in the Graduate Development Team. This includes Module IS4001: Research Skills and Professional Development which, if completed, counts for 25 hours, plus 20 hours if the associated assessment is undertaken;
- Internal courses and seminars offered by the School;
- Poster presentations at conferences, seminars or poster competitions (10 hours per event if activity is external to the University; 5 hours for University events);
- Oral presentations at conferences/seminars (15 hours per event if activity is external to the University; 8 hours for University events);
- External workshop requiring active participation: 5 hours.

The student should keep a record of the skills training undertaken on the Training Needs Analysis form and this will be reviewed by the Supervisor and student at the time of the Annual Progress Report. A revised version of the Training Needs Analysis form, reflecting any changes made as a result of the annual review, will then be submitted with the Annual Progress Report.

A full list of the 90/60 research skills training hours will need to be submitted with the thesis for forwarding to the Examiners.

8. Declaration by the Student

I have read and agree with the University's Code of Practice for Research Degrees and the General Regulations for Degrees by Research and Thesis. I have discussed the recommended skills training with my Supervisor(s) and completed a Training Needs Analysis form which will be subject to annual review. I have read the School Health and Safety Policy Document and have been advised of any particular hazards and precautions associated with my research area. I understand that I must not undertake any teaching without the prior agreement of my Supervisor. I am satisfied with both my responsibilities and those of my Supervisor as outlined above.

…… ……..

Signature of Student Date

9. <u>Declaration by the Supervisor and, if appointed, the Associate Supervisor</u>

We have met with the above named student, discussed with him/her the roles of the Supervisor and, if appointed, the Associate Supervisor(s)/Advisor/ External Contact and made recommendations for skills training which are recorded on the appended Training Needs Analysis form and will be subject to annual review. The student is familiar with the requirements of the School Health and Safety Policy and of any particular health and safety issues associated with the research area. I am/We are satisfied with both my responsibilities and those of the student as outlined above.

…….. ……..
Signature of Internal Supervisor Date

…….. ……..
Signature of Associate Supervisor Date
(if appointed)

When completed, the Supervisor and student should each have a copy of this form and the Supervisor should then pass the original to the Research Office within two months of the student's enrolment.

Appendix 2a: Training Needs Analysis

ASTON UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL

Post Graduate Research Student
Training Needs Analysis

The development opportunities available to research students are offered through a variety of sources; locally within the research group, at School level, and at institutional level through ResearcherPlus. To ensure satisfactory progress through your PhD, and in terms of your future career and employability, it is important that you consider what skills you need to develop and plan how this might be achieved over the duration of your PhD.

The training needs analysis is conducted against a national Researcher Development Framework (RDF) which is endorsed by the Research Councils and other research funders. The RDF contains greater detail about how to interpret each of the domains. Development in many of the aspects is achieved directly as a consequence of studying for a PhD, but for many others development can be achieved by attending or participating in other activities.

Use the tables below to indicate against each topic your development needs as agreed between you and your Supervisor. Course topics currently available through ResearcherPlus have been listed; visit the ResearcherPlus website for more information and to book a place on a course.

Additional spaces have been provided to allow you and your Supervisor to consider other skills development that may be available elsewhere (eg at School level or externally). Your training needs should be reviewed annually.

ResearcherPlus course topics mapped against RDF domains	Required	Optional	Date to be completed	Additional comments	Date completed
Professional and intellectual attributes: **Includes sub-domains of knowledge base, cognitive abilities, and creativity**					
An Introduction to Designing Questionnaires and Surveys					
Managing & Conducting Qualitative Research Interviews					
Running Focus Groups					
Qualitative Research Interviews; Improving your Practice					
NVivo – an introduction					
Endnote					
Microsoft Excel Levels 1, 2 & 3					
Microsoft Word Intermediate and Advanced					
Giving feedback					
Reading & Note-taking for Academic Purposes					
Personal Effectiveness: **Includes sub-domains personal qualities, self-management and personal & career development**					
An Introduction to Project Management					
Managing your PhD					
Managing your Time					

ResearcherPlus course topics mapped against RDF domains	Required	Optional	Date to be completed	Additional comments	Date completed
Making Effective Job Applications					
Doing Well in Interviews					
Careers and Personal Development Planning					
Research governance and organisation: **Includes sub-domains professional conduct, research management, and finance, funding and resources**					
Manual Handling					
Copyright					
Introduction to Project Management					
Microsoft Project					
Engagement, Influence and Impact: **Includes sub-domains working with others, communication and dissemination, and engagement and impact**					
Presentation Skills for New Researchers					
Microsoft PowerPoint					
Microsoft Word for Researchers, Intermediate and Advanced					
Being Effective in Meetings					

ResearcherPlus course topics mapped against RDF domains	Required	Optional	Date to be completed	Additional comments	Date completed
Viva Preparation and Presentation					
Writing for Publication					
Writing your Thesis					
Laboratory demonstrating					
Demonstrating in Computer Labs					
Tutoring small groups					
Aston Cert: An Introduction to Learning & Teaching in HE(Level 7 module, 20 credits)					
Being an Effective Team Member					
Motivating Others					
Cross- Domain provision					
10 credit Level 7 module – Research Skills and Professional Development. Offered as a 3-day intensive course, this covers: critical and analytical thinking and reading, research ethics, referencing and plagiarism, presentations skills, preparing poster presentations, managing your PhD, working with your Supervisor, team working, learning styles and reflective practice. The module is assessed through a literature review (3000 words), a presentation, and the development of a					

ResearcherPlus course topics mapped against RDF domains	Required	Optional	Date to be completed	Additional comments	Date completed
project plan. Open to all PhD students, some students simply attend the module, others also complete the assessment.					

Signed	
Student:	**Date:**
Supervisor:	**Date:**

Appendix 3: Record of Supervisory Meeting Form

This form has been designed to assist you in maintaining a record of your formal meetings with your Supervisor. A formal meeting is a meeting where progress is carefully considered and reviewed. Initially, these should occur approximately once a month, and at least once every three months throughout your research degree. You should consider the use of these notes as part of the personal management aspect of research planning.

Copies of these meeting records should be forwarded to the School Office with your Annual Progress Report forms.

ASTON UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL

RECORD OF SUPERVISORY MEETING

Student:	**Supervisor:**	**Associate Supervisor:**
Date:	**Time From:**	**Time To:**
Working Title:		
Points Raised/discussed:		
Proposed Action by Student:		
Proposed Action by Supervisor:		
Agenda for Next Supervisory Meeting:		
Time and Date of Next Planned Meeting:		
Supervisor's Signature	**Student's Signature**	

Appendix 4: Guide to Requirements for the Qualifying Report

ASTON UNIVERSITY GRADUATE SCHOOL

Requirements for Qualifying Report

Students and Supervisors should also refer to the General Regulations for Degrees by Research and Thesis, specifically the section on Qualifying Reports (Regulation 8.3).

In approving these requirements, the School's Research Committee has specified that Qualifying Reports should be a minimum of 6,000 words.

****

The Qualifying Report should show evidence that the student has:

- read widely around the subject area
- identified the scope and aims of their research
- gained a detailed knowledge of previous work of direct relevance to their own research
- understood the implications of previous work for their own research
- planned and designed appropriate research work for the remaining years of study
- considered ethical issues surrounding their proposed research
- undertaken a risk assessment, and carried out relevant risk-management practices
- demonstrated necessary practical skills or identified how and when these will be achieved
- sourced any participants / animal subjects / samples etc necessary to undertake their research
- appropriately acknowledged and referenced original sources and secondary literature
- demonstrated the writing skills necessary to author a clear, concise and well-written thesis
- considered the pace at which work must be completed in order to submit their thesis on time
- the ability to fulfil the requirements of a PhD (a substantial original contribution to knowledge) or an MPhil (a contribution to knowledge).

The piece of written work submitted should demonstrate the student's theoretical and methodological competence. The elements of the report may or may not constitute chapters of the thesis but should in all cases provide:

- an overview of the main problem to be studied
- an overview of the principal literature or other context for the research
- an account of the work already carried out
- a general strategy for future work, including a work plan and details about ethics submission/approval where relevant
- a timetable for the remaining work envisaged
- a provisional table of contents for the final thesis.

The report should include both theoretical and empirical work. Theoretical work might include a literature review, theoretical analysis and a statement of main research objectives, methods and anticipated outcomes. Experimental work would normally be expected to include the report from one study. In cases where this work is not expected at this point, the chapter could include a report of preparatory work, ongoing empirical work, or pilot studies.

The student should submit the Qualifying Report to the Supervisor within 10 months (if full-time) or 22 months (if part-time) of the research start date. The Supervisor will arrange for an examination of the content of the report at a *viva voce* examination conducted by the Supervisor, the Advisor (if appointed) and at least one other member of the Academic Staff (Regulation 8.3(a) of the General Regulations for Degrees by Research and Thesis) before the end of the 12th (full-time) or 24th (part-time) month.

Appendix 5: Researcher Development Statement

The UK is committed to enhancing the higher-level capabilities of the UK workforce including the development of world-class researchers. Researchers are critical to economic success, addressing major global challenges, and building a leading knowledge economy. The Researcher Development Statement (RDS) sets out the knowledge, behaviours and attributes of effective and highly skilled researchers appropriate for a wide range of careers.

The RDS is for policy makers and research organisations that provide personal, professional and career development for researchers in higher education.

The Researcher Development Statement is derived from the Researcher Development Framework (RDF), a major new approach to researcher development, which aims to enhance our capacity to build the UK workforce, develop world-class researchers and build our research base.

The RDS and RDF will contribute to researcher training and development in the UK by providing a strategic statement (RDS) and operational framework (RDF) to support the implementation of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers[1] , the QAA Code of practice for research degree programmes[2] and the 'Roberts'[3] recommendations for postgraduate researchers and research staff.

The RDS is structured in four domains, which encompass what researchers need to know to do research, how to be effective in their approach to research, when working with others, and in contributing to the wider environment. Within each of the domains are three sub-domains and associated descriptors, which describe different aspects of being a researcher.

Domain A: Knowledge and intellectual abilities The knowledge, intellectual abilities and techniques to do research.	**Domain B: Personal effectiveness** The personal qualities and approach needed to be an effective researcher.
Domain C: Research governance and organisation The knowledge of the standards, requirements and professionalism to do research.	**Domain D: Engagement, influence and impact** The knowledge and skills to work with others and ensure the wider impact of research.

The Researcher Development Statement is an evolution of the Research Councils' Joint Skills Statement (JSS) and replaces the JSS as the key reference statement for the development of postgraduate researchers' skills and attributes and researchers employed in higher education. All the skills and attributes of the JSS have been incorporated into the RDS and their distribution is identified in the table below. A two-way mapping of the RDS and the JSS is available on the RDF section of the Vitae website.

For more information and to comment on the Researcher Development Framework and associated Statement go to www.vitae.ac.uk/rdf

[1] www.researchconcordat.ac.uk

[2] www.qaa.ac.uk

[3] http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http:/www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/set_for_success.htm

The Researcher Development Statement is copyright Vitae®, © 2010 Careers Research and Advisory Centre (CRAC) Limited.

Appendix 6: Rights and Responsibilities of Students - Behaviour on Campus

Aston University functions on a basis of tolerance and appreciation of diversity, rigorous discussion and appraisal of ideas, and mutual support in achieving personal and collegiate aims.

There are policies and codes of practice which support these functions. Some involve legal obligations on both the University and its members, including students. You can find these on the Registry part of the University web site. As an Aston student you agree to abide by the University Regulations, including those relating to academic and general discipline. You do this when you enrol with the University.

Regulations and policies are written in language that may not be very specific or clear so this guide sets out expectations which, if you abide by them, will keep you out of trouble and make your experience and that of others within the University a pleasant and rewarding one.

We expect you:

- not to disrupt teaching/learning sessions with inappropriate talking, horseplay or other behaviour;
- to turn off mobile phones during classes and at other times and places when it is considerate eg in the library;
- to prepare for and participate in class sessions as requested by the organiser;
- to respect the efforts of the session leader to direct and inform you;
- to use resources such as computer rooms, the library and other facilities sensibly and with consideration of other users;
- to maintain a safe, clean and tidy environment on the campus and in the buildings of the University;
- to show respect for your fellow students and employees of the University - even when you disagree with them.

You can expect:

- timetabled sessions to occur as published, unless changed with due notice to you with notice of alternative arrangements for such sessions;
- good quality academic input in class sessions;
- appropriate supporting resources to back up your class sessions;
- timely feedback on assessments and other work;
- comfortable, clean and safe working conditions appropriate for the type of activity you are engaged in;
- a supportive network in the University when you need help with academic and personal issues;
- respect from other members of the University.

If things go wrong with what the University provides:

- let someone know – if in doubt, see the School Research Administrator and s/he will direct you;

- use the feedback mechanisms provided by the University – student representatives, Guild, Welfare services.

If other students are disruptive:

- let someone know – School Research Office, Residential Services, Security – whoever is appropriate. If in doubt ask the School Research Administrator;
- you may talk to a University officer in confidence for advice before action is taken;
- you may be asked to provide evidence in a disciplinary hearing. This might appear intimidating to an individual. However, if the complaint is shared by others you can collectively bring it to our attention and get our support in handling the process. We cannot act without specific information and evidence.

If you are disruptive:

- there are disciplinary procedures, at School and at University level;
- sanctions are applied. These range from written reprimands through fines to exclusion from campus, depending on the severity of the offence;
- note that students excluded from campus may miss examinations, with impact on their graduation date;
- non-payment of fines will leave you in debt to the University and graduation will be delayed until you clear the debt;
- reprimands in your files might have to be declared in a character reference to future employers.

This document is advisory and does not take precedence over any University regulation.

The following link will take you to the appropriate regulations (you can find them under 'Current Students' on the university homepage):
http://www1.aston.ac.uk/registry/for-staff/regsandpolicies/

Appendix 7: ABS Research Student Progression Chart

Full-Time Doctoral Students (Year 1)

October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	September
• Induction • Enrolment • RMC I Block • RMC II Weekly • Meet with Supervisor • Engage Log • RDP Exam Board	• RMC II Weekly • Deadline for RMC I Engage Log • Open Forum	• RMC II Weekly • Supervisory Logs • Engage Log • Break for Christmas	**Term 2** • RMC III Weekly • RDP Exam Board • Engage Log • Dead-line for RMC II	• RMC III Weekly • Engage Log • Open Forum	• RMC III Weekly • Supervisory Logs • Engage Log • Break for Easter	**Term 3** • RMC III Weekly • RMC IV Block • Engage Log	• RMC III Weekly • Open Forum • Engage Log • Deadline for RMC III & IV	• Colloquium • Engage Log • Supervisory Log	• Submit QR • Engage Log • RDP Exam Board	• Work on Ethics Approval • Engage Log	• Annual Report • Qualifying Report Viva • Engage Log

Full-Time Doctoral Students (Year 2)

October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	September
Term 1 • RDP Exam Board • Engage Log	• Open Forum • Engage Log	• Supervisory Logs • Engage Log • Break for Christmas	**Term 2** • Engage Log	• Open Forum • Engage Log	• Supervisory Logs • Engage Log • Break for Easter.	**Term 3** • Engage Log	• Open Forum • Engage Log	• Supervisory Logs • Engage Log • Colloquium	• RDP Exam Board • Engage Log	• Engage Log	• Annual Report • Engage Log

Full-Time Doctoral Students (Final Year)

October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	September
Term 1 • RDP Exam Board • Engage Log	• Open Forum • Engage Log	• Supervisory Logs • Engage Log • Break for Christmas.	**Term 2** • Engage Log	• Open Forum • Engage Log	• Supervisory Logs • Engage Log • Break for Easter.	**Term 3** • Engage Log	• Open Forum • Engage Log	• Supervisory Logs • Engage Log • Colloquium	• RDP Exam Board • Engage Log	• Confirm External Examiner	• Annual Report • Submission of Thesis or Request for Extension

Part-Time Doctoral Students (Year 1)

October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept
• Induction • Enrolment • RMC I Block • RMC II (BB) • Meet with Supervisor • RDP Exam Board • Engage Log	• RMC II via Blackboard (BB) • Deadline for RMC I • Open Forum • Engage Log	• RMC II via BB • Supervisory Logs • Engage Log • Break for Christmas.	**Term 2** • RMC II via BB • Engage Log	• Deadline for RMC II • Open Forum. • Engage Log	• RMC II via BB • Supervisory Logs • Engage Log • Easter Break	**Term 3**. • RMC IV Block (optional) • Engage Log	• Open Forum • Engage Log	• Supervisory Logs • Colloquium • Engage Log	• RDP Exam Board • Deadline for RMCIV • Engage Log	• Engage Log	• Annual Report • Engage Log

Part-Time Doctoral Students (Year 2)

October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	September
Term 1 • RMC III via BB • RDP Exam Board • Engage Log	• RMC III via BB • Open Forum • Engage Log	• RMC III via BB • Supervisory Logs • Engage Log • Christmas Break	**Term 2** • RMC III via BB • RDP	• Open Forum • Deadline RMC III	• Easter Break • Supervisory Logs • Engage Log • Draft QR	**Term 3** • RMC IV Block compulsory • Engage Log	• Open Forum • Deadline for RMCIV • Engage Log	• Supervisory Logs • Colloquium • Engage Log	• Submit QR • RDP Exam Board • Engage Log	• Engage Log	• Annual Report • QR viva • Engage Log

Part-Time Doctoral Students (3rd, 4th & Final Year) Working with your supervisors towards the completion of your thesis.

October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	September
Term 1 • RDP Exam Board • Engage Log	• Open Forum • Engage Log	• Supervisory Logs • Engage Log • Christmas Break	**Term 2** • Engage Log	• Open Forum • Engage Log	• Supervisory Logs • Engage Log • Easter Break	**Term 3** • Engage Log	• Open Forum • Engage Log	• Colloquium • Supervisory Logs • Engage Log • Annual Report	• Confirm External Examiner • RDP Exam Board • Engage Log	• Engage Log	• Annual Report • Submission Thesis or Request for Extension • Engage Log