SECTION 4

Assessment Regulation 10:  Appeal against a decision of a Progression Monitoring Panel (for students on an approved course of supervised research)

Students are advised to seek impartial help, advice, guidance and support from sabbatical officers in the Students’ Union and Students’ Union Advice Centre.

10.1 Candidates may in the circumstances set out below request a review of the Progression Monitoring Panel’s decision.

10.1.1 An ‘appeal’ is defined as a request for a review of a decision of a Progression Monitoring Panel charged with making decisions on student progression in the context of an approved course of supervised research. Such an appeal will always be concerned with the conduct of the assessment and not with questioning the academic judgement of the Panel.

Grounds for an appeal

10.2 An appeal may only be made in relation to the decision made by the Progression Monitoring Panel. Given the existence of procedures for complaint during the study period, alleged inadequacy of supervisory or other arrangements (including feedback) during the period of study do not constitute grounds for requesting a review of the Panel’s decision. By submitting for or attending the Progression Monitoring exercise, it will be assumed that the student has declared that he or she is fit to undertake that assessment and a subsequent appeal based on the grounds of a previously undeclared extenuating circumstance will not be considered.

10.3 Leave to appeal will only be granted on one or more of the following grounds:

a) that there is evidence of procedural irregularity in the conduct of the progression monitoring exercise (including administrative error) of such a nature as to cause doubt as to whether the result might have been different had there not been any irregularity;

b) that there is evidence of unfair or improper assessment on the part of one or more of the Panel members.

Candidates may not otherwise challenge the academic judgement of the Progression Monitoring Panel.

Procedure for dealing with an appeal

10.4 A notice for an appeal against the decision of the Progression Monitoring Panel shall be made in writing to the Head of Registry’s office as soon as possible and normally not later than ten working days from the date of notification of the Panel’s decision. The appeal must state the grounds on which it is being made and include relevant independent evidence in support of the case being made.
10.5 On receipt of the appeal, the Head of Registry or nominated deputy will review the documentation to identify if one or more of the grounds under 10.3 has occurred and/or is demonstrated within the documentation. If leave to appeal is not granted, the Head of Registry or nominated deputy will write to the student with a full explanation. In cases where the student considers that the appeal has not been satisfactorily addressed, a request for a review should be made in writing within 10 working days to the Head of Registry who will arrange for the case to be reviewed by an officer of the Registry who has had no prior involvement. New evidence cannot be introduced at this stage. The student will be advised of the outcome within ten working days of the receipt of the review request. The decision of the reviewing officer will be final and a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued.

10.6 If leave to appeal is granted, the appeal will be considered by an Appeals Committee convened by the Head of Registry. The Appeals Committee will consist of three persons having experience of supervising and examining research degrees and who have had no previous involvement in the case nor be drawn from the School in which the candidate is based. No student or research degree candidate may be a member of a Progression Monitoring Appeals Committee.

10.7 The Head of Registry or a nominated deputy shall act as secretary and convenor of the Progression Monitoring Appeals Committee, but shall not be a member.

10.8 The Progression Monitoring Appeals Committee shall normally hold its first meeting within one month of the submission by the candidate of the written case for the appeal. Its meetings shall be held in private and its proceedings shall be confidential.

10.9 The candidate may, if he/she wishes, present his/her case to the Appeals Committee in person and has the right to be accompanied by a friend when presenting the case to the Appeals Committee. Notification of the date of the Appeals Committee will be forwarded to the candidate at least five working days in advance of the meeting.

10.10 The meeting of the Appeals Committee may be postponed for no more than ten working days, if the candidate who has made the appeal can show good reason for not being able to attend at the originally specified time. However, the failure or inability of the candidate to attend the meeting of the Appeals Committee will not preclude the Appeals Committee from reaching a decision.

10.11 An Appeals Committee may require a Progression Monitoring Panel to reconsider its decision:

10.11.1 if the Appeals Committee is satisfied on evidence produced by a candidate or any other person that there has been a material administrative error, or that the progression monitoring exercise was not conducted in accordance with the current regulations, or that some other material irregularity has occurred.

10.12 All decisions of the Appeals Committee shall be made by a majority vote of the members. In the event of the votes being tied the decision shall be in favour of the student and the procedure laid down in paragraph 10.11 shall be followed.
10.13 A Progression Monitoring Panel Appeals is not constituted as a Progression Monitoring Panel and has no authority to set aside the decision of Panel and thereby to recommend progression.

10.14 The decision of the Appeals Committee shall be final, with the proviso that the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research) may hear complaints based on evidence that the University’s processes were not followed in relation to the Appeals Committee hearing or require in exceptional circumstances the Appeals Committee to be reconvened.

10.15 The Appeals Committee shall submit a written report of its conclusions within ten working days of its final meeting to the candidate, the members of the Progression Monitoring Panel, and the Chair of the University Research Committee.

10.16 The University will meet reasonable and proportionate incidental expenses (for example, travel within the UK, subsistence and essential accommodation) necessarily incurred by successful appellants as a result of attending a Progression Monitoring Panel Appeals Committee on the production of valid receipts. The University will not meet any legal expenses.

10.17 The Head of Registry will prepare annual statistical reports on complaints and appeals for the University’s Teaching and Learning Committee and Research Committee. This report will identify any issues which need prompt attention.

**Note:** This should be read in conjunction with the relevant progression monitoring regulations as detailed in the Handbook of Regulations for Awards.