Research Students’ Handbook
2015–16

Centre for Applied Linguistics
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1 Welcome

Thank you for choosing our doctoral programme. We are very pleased to welcome you to the Centre for Applied Linguistics and hope that your stay with us will be a happy one. We have extensive experience in helping doctoral students to get the best out of their doctoral studies and will do all that we can to ensure that your time at Warwick will be successful and rewarding.

The first few days on any new programme can be overwhelming in terms of the information you are expected to process and it can be difficult to separate the essential from the merely peripheral. This handbook is designed to help you settle in as quickly as possible by providing you with the advice and information you will need in order to complete your studies successfully. We therefore suggest that you take some time to read it carefully, familiarising yourself with its layout and contents. You will need to refer to it throughout the programme in order to understand and follow relevant procedures and regulations, so please treat it as an important source of reference — and please don’t hesitate to ask us for help if it contains anything you do not understand.

We hope you find this handbook helpful and look forward to receiving any feedback or suggestions you may have.

Good luck in your studies!

IMPORTANT NOTE

From 1 August 2011 an amendment to Regulation 38 relating to the period of study for research degrees came into force. From this date, all MPhil/PhD students are automatically registered for 4 years (full-time) and 7 years (part-time), although the expectation is still that students will normally complete their studies in the minimum time (3 years for full-time and 5 years for part-time students).

2 The Centre for Applied Linguistics

The Centre is located on the first floor of the Social Sciences Building, which is conveniently situated close to both the library and the Arts Centre. All the main rooms are on the same floor and within easy reach of one another, so it should be easy to find your way around (if you have any problems, colleagues in the office will be happy to point you in the right direction). As you’ll discover, this arrangement also contributes to a sense of being part of a small and friendly group.

In fact, the atmosphere in the Centre may be more egalitarian than the situation you have been accustomed to, but this is something you will soon get used to. All members of our group, whether students or staff, are treated with equal respect and first names are the norm. We will, of course, ask you to let us know the name by which you would like to be known.
2.1 The office

At the heart of the Centre is the office, located in Room S1.74. Several colleagues work there and they will play a very important part in your life at Warwick. The office is open during ordinary working hours every weekday but is closed on Wednesday afternoon to allow time for essential administrative work. A full list of all staff, with details of responsibilities, rooms and contact details, is included in Appendix 1 for your convenience. In what follows, colleagues will be referred to in terms of their responsibilities to give you an idea of how the Centre is organised.

The Departmental Administrator has general oversight of all the Centre’s operations, while the Departmental Coordinator oversees research matters and award-bearing programmes. Your regular contact is likely to be with the Research Degrees Administrator, whom you can consult on practical matters relating to your research studies (panels, conferences, etc.). The Short Courses Secretary deals with (among other things) room bookings, while the Learning Resource Centre Assistant is responsible for the Learning Resource Centre, which houses the Centre’s own collection of books, equipment and materials.

These colleagues work very closely together, so if an issue is important and you cannot find the person you are seeking it is very likely that another office colleague will be able to help you. You will also occasionally see notices posted in rooms or on notice boards by office colleagues relating to procedures or arrangements in the Centre. Please make sure that you follow their advice in these matters because the happy and successful functioning of the Centre depends on it.

2.2 Communications

Details of the address and contact details of the Centre are also included in Appendix 1. Please note the prefixes that need to be added to internal numbers if you are phoning from outside the university. If you are phoning from outside the UK, you may like to note that the country code is 44.

Your mail may be sent via the Centre and all student mail will be put into the pigeonholes located near the Student Common Room. Please make sure that you check the pigeonholes regularly because tutors or fellow students may wish to drop a note or materials into your pigeonhole.

The main means of communication in the Centre and in the university as a whole is via email, so it is essential that you check your email every day. Most of the team in the Centre try to respond to students within 24 hours whenever this is possible, so it’s important to try to adjust to a system where rapid exchanges are the norm.

Please note that all emails from staff must be sent to your Warwick account and that personal accounts cannot be used. This is the only way of ensuring that all emails are received within a system that is shared and internally maintained. Of course, this does not mean that you cannot maintain a personal account, and IT Services (or fellow students) will be able to advise you on how Warwick mail can be redirected to this account. However, it is still essential to check your Warwick account regularly.
You must also ensure that your supervisor(s) knows your address, e-mail address and phone number (where you have one) so that you can be contacted. This information should also be given to the Research Degrees Administrator and the Graduate Office. Please make sure that you notify them of any changes as soon as possible.

The departmental notice boards are located outside the main office (S1.74) and in the corridor leading to A1.05. The research students’ notice board is located on the wall opposite the office, adjacent to room S1.81, and there is a Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) notice board next to S1.88. These notice boards are an important source of information about courses, classes, options, visits, conferences, etc. and they are updated regularly, so please check them every time you come into the Centre.

Research students also have their own electronic Discussion Forum. This is open to research students and staff for discussion of topics relating to academic (or social) interests. As soon as you have a Warwick username and password, you will be able to access this. The forum is located on the Research Students’ homepage (which also contains links to students’ individual webpages giving details of personal background, research topic and work-in-progress).

2.3 Research degrees team

During your time at the Centre you will get to know most if not all of the academic staff who work here, but most of your contact will be with your supervisor(s). You will also come into close contact with other PhD supervisors via panels, research groups, etc. and we would like you to feel that in joining the Centre you are also joining a large family of researchers with an interest in sharing their discoveries and ideas. Naturally, you will get to know some of us better than others, but we would like you to feel that we are all approachable. Contact details of the research degrees team can be found in Appendix 1 and a full list of all Centre staff can be found on our webpage.

As mentioned at the start of this section, you may find relationships in the Centre more informal than you are used to, but it is important not to confuse informality with casualness. We are very committed to our work and take our responsibilities very seriously — especially those towards our students. We should like you to feel that you are part of a larger community which includes staff and students and that you can bring your questions and concerns to us safe in the knowledge that they will be treated seriously and in appropriate confidence.

2.4 Your personal Adviser

The personal tutor system that you may be familiar with from your studies at Master’s level does not apply to doctoral students. However, it is still important to have someone you can turn to for advice or guidance, so all doctoral students have access to an adviser who fulfills a role very similar to that of a personal tutor. The personal adviser for all students involved in research is the Director of Graduate Studies.

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Although you should not expect to have regular meetings, your adviser will be available should you need to make contact. If you have concerns, academic or personal, that you feel you cannot raise with your supervisor, you should make an appointment to see your adviser, who will listen to you in confidence and, where appropriate, offer advice or guidance. Advisers also follow the progress of all the students in their group, so the person you are talking to will be familiar with you and with your progress.

If necessary, your adviser may ask you to make an appointment to discuss some aspect of your studies. If this happens it is likely to relate to a matter of some importance so you should make sure to attend the meeting as soon as possible.

2.5 Research Student Rooms

Although research students are not assigned individual desks and computers, the University’s Space Management team allocate PhD study rooms to CAL based on the numbers of students enrolled. There are currently five PhD study rooms available for use, all on the ground floor or first floor of Social Sciences: S0.31; S0.35; S0.39; S1.85; S1.100. Access to these rooms is restricted to CAL PhD students and is obtainable via a 4-digit code number. Please do not bring guests (including MA/MSc students) into these rooms and under no circumstances divulge the door code numbers to anyone who is not a CAL research student. Because of the confidential nature of some research data, a breach of this rule is regarded as very serious by both fellow students and staff. For safekeeping of personal laptops, books, etc., individual lockers are provided (keys are obtainable from the CAL office on payment of a £5.00 deposit which is refundable when your studies end).

To use the PCs in these rooms you will need your Warwick username and password. To use the networked printers in these rooms, you will need to install the relevant print queue connection. If you have any problems with computers or printers in any of the above rooms, please report the fault to the Research Degrees Administrator as soon as possible so that she can contact IT services on your behalf.

Since the study rooms are shared with other PhD colleagues, please be considerate of one another in how you use the rooms. It is possible that one or more rooms may become designated as ‘silent study’ rooms by the Student Staff Liaison Committee, in consultation with the research student community. When your studies end, do make sure you remove any personal effects (books, papers, etc.) as these may otherwise be discarded or recycled.

Although you may bring food and drink into the study rooms, please make every effort to keep them tidy and do not leave food in them as this can result in unpleasant smells. As a research student you are also entitled to use the staff kitchen, which contains a fridge, kettle, toaster and microwave. Please make every effort to ensure that you do not cook food that creates strong smells (the kitchen is next to a classroom) and that you clean up after you have finished. If you use the fridge, please ensure that you do not store food beyond its use-by date. The kitchen is a shared facility and all users, whether staff or students, are asked to be considerate in their use of it.
3 The doctorate experience

Completing doctoral research involves a huge investment of time and effort. For three years it will be your primary focus for the majority of your time and will make demands on you that you could not have anticipated when you applied to join the programme. However, it will also yield rewards of a very special sort that are not to be found in any other form of study. Although you will have your supervisor and fellow students to call on for help and advice, doctoral research is very much an individual enterprise, so you will need to draw heavily on your own resources. For this reason, you need to familiarise yourself with the systems and resources available to you.

All courses begin with advice to read the relevant literature, but in the case of the doctoral student this is not merely helpful, it is essential. You need to know, for example, that there are very specific rules relating to the submission of your thesis and where to find these, and you need to know what programmes (and associated training) are available to you free of charge as a research student. This section will provide you with directions to these key resources.

3.1 Getting to know the system

Although you will soon become accustomed to the ways and routines of the Centre, other parts of the university may seem remote, so it’s a good idea to get to know your way around the system as soon as possible. For doctoral students, the essential point of contact is the Graduate School, details of which are provided in the next section. Have a look at the resources available there and note down anything that you think might be useful to you.

If you try to get to know the system too quickly, you might find that you’re suffering from information overload, so take your time over this. Dedicate the first week or so to getting to know your way around, perhaps following the steps below.

Steps in finding your way around the system:

- Check out the Graduate School site and download key documents.
- Note any courses, workshops, etc. that you think might be useful to you (check out the Research Student Skills Programme).
- Explore the PhD blogs, Warwick Portfolio and ePortfolio sites and reflect on how they might be useful to you. Be prepared to discuss these with your supervisor if you think there are aspects you would like to explore.
- Have a look at the Library site in advance of the tour that has been arranged for you as part of your induction. This will help you get the best out of your tour.

We want your stay with us to be a happy one and we want you to feel part of our community as someone who has a unique contribution to make to it. This is why we want to underline here the University’s commitment to equality of opportunity, which is summed up in the following policy statement:
The University of Warwick, recognising the value of sustaining and advancing a safe and welcoming learning environment, strives to treat both employees and students with respect and dignity, treat them fairly with regards to all assessments, choices and procedures, and to give them encouragement to reach their full potential. Therefore the University strives to treat all its members, and visitors, fairly and aims to eliminate unjustifiable discrimination on the grounds of gender, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, political beliefs, religious beliefs or practices, disability, marital status, family circumstances, sexual orientation, spent criminal convictions, age or any other inappropriate ground.

The University requires all members of its community to recognise their responsibilities under this policy and we in the Centre take it very seriously. If you feel at any time that you have been treated unfairly, you should contact your adviser in the first instance or, where this would be inappropriate, the Director of the Centre. If you would like to know more about this aspect of the University’s work, you should go to the Equal and Diversity web page.

3.2 Graduate School

The Graduate School is responsible for all aspects of administration and support for research students, so your stay at Warwick will involve you in a good deal of contact with it, either directly or indirectly. For this reason, it’s a very good idea to spend plenty of time exploring its website. This section will highlight some of the aspects of this that you might find particularly useful. You should also check out the excellent facilities available on the Postgraduate Hub.

One way of getting started and meeting students from other departments is to sign up for one of the Graduate School’s research student Induction Sessions, details of which can be found on the web. Evaluations of this from our own students have been very mixed, but we nevertheless feel that it is useful if only as a means of reminding you of what is available.

You may also want to sign up for one of the Research Student Skills Programmes, which are offered at various times. The sessions offered vary from year to year but tend to cover a wide range from topics such as research management to presentation and communication skills.

In addition to this handbook, it’s a good idea to have a copy of the University Guidelines on the Supervision and Monitoring of Research Degree Students and the Guide to Examinations for Higher Degrees by Research, both of which are downloadable as pdf files from the Graduate School’s Forms, Policies and Procedures Library. These are hardly bedtime reading, but a quick read through will give you some idea of how the supervision and examination process is seen at Warwick. A copy of the Regulations Governing Research Degrees might also be useful for reference if necessary, though it is of less practical value than the two guides.
3.3 Planning, reflecting and sharing

There’s a lot more to planning a thesis than simply going through a series of formal stages; it’s an evolving and reflexive process that demands a great deal of self-awareness as well as understanding of the project itself. For this reason, it’s very helpful to share your experiences with others and, depending on the circumstances, to share insights and materials. This section identifies four resources that will support the process of reflection and enable you to share aspects of your world with others, both inside and outside our local research community.

The Warwick Portfolio is an online portal designed to assist students with their skills development during their time at Warwick, and help enhance their overall employability upon completion of their degrees. Through the Portfolio, students can access information on skills training opportunities from across the University, including training offered at faculty level. In addition, the Portfolio offers students a private online space where they can maintain a record of the wide variety of training they will undertake during their programme, as well as providing a space to reflect on and compile evidence of their skills development for future use.

The main way of sharing information, ideas and opinions is via Warwick Blogs. However, it’s best to regard these as a personal tool rather than something related specifically to your research work. The relevant website provides information on blogs and an indication of how you can benefit from them, but whether or not you use them is really a matter of personal preference.

If your interest lies primarily in your research, then an ePortfolio is much more likely to be relevant to you. The following description from the relevant website sums up what an ePortfolio can offer:

As a window on your research world, an ePortfolio is an online record of your academic life. It is a collection of web pages, representing and showcasing your research, ideas, experience, resources and academic interest. With an audience of fellow researchers within your department, the Warwick community, potential employers and the wider academic world, an ePortfolio provides structure and presentation surpassing what you can achieve with a blog.

The use of this service is voluntary, but some students have found it very useful. Of course, what you get out depends very much on what you put in, and in order to derive full benefit from the service you will need to spend time developing your own ePortfolio. Note that once you have created and uploaded your ePortfolio, you will be entitled to request a set of business cards from the CAL Research Degrees Administrator.

While the previous three resources are essentially individual, the Professional & Research Development (PRD) service is something you are encouraged to explore with your supervisor. This is based on the Research Council’s list of key skills that postgraduate researchers are expected to develop during their research and has two main aims: to help you plan a programme of research training suited to your particular needs, and to serve as a record of the skills you acquire during your research here at Warwick. We feel that you will benefit from the opportunity to develop your own profile and encourage you to discuss this with your supervisor at an early stage in the supervision process.

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3.4 Research groups

As you will know from your exploration of the Centre’s webpages, our research is organised in terms of particular areas of interest, each represented by a specific research group: Language Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LLTA), Professional and Academic Discourse (PAD), and Working and Communicating Across Cultures (WACC). As a research student, you will be attached to one of these groups (possibly even more than one if your research cuts across different areas) and will be invited to attend sessions of the group. These will involve a range of activities including discussions of topical issues, responses to key research or position papers, workshop activities, and attendance at in-house or guest lectures.

Our aim is to involve our PhD students as directly as possible in the research activities and discussions taking place in the Centre so that they feel at the heart of events and developments. Much of this work revolves around the activities of research groups, but we may also organise other events designed to facilitate engagement across research groups and in this case you will be expected to attend as part of the researcher development process. There will also be other activities that may be of interest to you (e.g. visiting speakers give talks to MA/MSc students on aspects of research) and you may wish to take advantage of some of these.

When your research has developed sufficiently, you can also expect to be asked to present a report on work in progress in order to benefit from the feedback of fellow students and academic colleagues. We hope you will enjoy this opportunity. It is not unusual to be nervous when making presentations, but an audience of supportive colleagues offers an excellent opportunity for a gentle entry into the public arena and a good way of gaining confidence before presenting a fully-fledged conference paper. If you prepare carefully, take your supervisor’s advice and don’t try to cover too much ground in the limited time available, you should find the whole process fairly straightforward and very rewarding. The same applies in the case of the paper you will be asked to present at the annual Research Students’ Conference described in Section 3.9 below.

Although there is no substitute for face-to-face engagement, it can also be valuable to engage in more protracted discussions in writing, and the online Discussion Forum will give you the chance to do this. It can be used for all sorts of communications, including exchanges of information, advice, comment, etc. The extent to which it is used tends to depend on what is happening at the time and how interesting the relevant issues are, and not all students use it. Nevertheless, even if you’re not a frequent user there may come a time when it provides just the sort of platform or point of contact you need, so it’s a valuable resource to have.

3.5 Using the university library

One of the most important jobs you face in your first couple of months of work is getting to grips with using the university library. The mark of an efficient research student is how well they can use library resources, which include not only books but also academic journals, abstracting journals, catalogues, and computer indexes.
In order to use the library, you will need your university card. Full-time students are normally issued with cards at registration, so you will be able to use the library from this point on. If you have any problems obtaining your university card, you will need to ask at the Graduate School Office in Senate House. The Centre does not issue these cards and will not be able to provide you with one.

We organise a library visit for research students around the beginning of the autumn term and this will give you the opportunity to get to know what facilities and resources are available to you. However, it’s well worth exploring the library’s facilities for yourself via the Library website. If you follow the link to the Main Library, you will find further links to essential information, resources and help for researchers. Even though you may not be able to remember all the options available to you, it’s important to become familiar with this site because it will play an important part in your work. If you return to it regularly in your first weeks you will soon be able to navigate it with confidence, and this will save valuable time when you need access to its resources later on in your studies.

Please note that strict copyright laws govern what can be photocopied and that it is your responsibility to ensure that your copying conforms to these. The general rule is that you can make one copy, for personal study use, of a journal article or of no more than 5% or one chapter of a book. However, special conditions sometimes apply. All library photocopiers have a copy of the relevant regulations.

A facility that some research students find especially convenient is the Learning Grid, which is a flexible, innovative and integrated learning environment open 24 hours a day, every day of the year except for Christmas day. It can be used by individuals or groups and offers a range of multimedia resources including video editing, wireless networking, cleverboards, networked PCs, video players, plasma screens and presentation rooms. If you would like to learn more, an audiovisual tour is available on its website.

At some point in your studies you may also wish to consult one of the Warwick doctoral theses available at the Modern Records Centre.

3.6 Using other libraries and collections

Details of other libraries you may use are available via the library website, but it is worth noting that Aston University library and the University of Birmingham library are both within easy reach. Aston’s library is much smaller than that of Warwick, though it does include some linguistics books and journals that are not available at Warwick; Birmingham has an excellent collection of linguistics books and journals and a separate Education Library.

The Learning Resources Centre can be found in room A1.06 on the first floor of the Social Sciences Building. In it you’ll find a collection of ELT course materials, books, audio, DVD and CD ROM materials as well as archive and country-specific collections of materials and documentation relevant to the teaching of English. The material here is the sort that you will not usually find in the Main Library, so it’s worth paying a visit to get a sense of what’s on the shelves. The Resources Centre also contains equipment which will enable you to listen to tapes, watch videos or try out CALL materials.
3.7 Other resources and support

Being a research student is quite different from being a student on a taught course. Most people find that some kind of psychological adjustment is necessary to a situation in which for a lot of the time you are working on your own. As well as having to plan and organise your studies, you will have to make your own decisions about how to spend your time. This is why we provide you with opportunities to join together with staff and other students in tutorials, seminars and social events, though inevitably such occasions will take up only a relatively small part of your time. This life can be lonely and unhealthy, especially if you don’t get enough exercise and outdoor activity. The university provides ample opportunity to engage in a wide range of sports and activities, social, physical and intellectual, and successful students usually manage to maintain a good balance between study, sport and social life.

Although it is not possible to list all the resources and support available to you, the information listed here may help you identify useful resources. Of course, the best advice usually comes from those who have gone through the process of settling in and dealing with day-to-day problems and opportunities, so your most valuable resources are fellow students in the second or third year of their doctoral studies.

**Printer credits (for printing and photocopying)**

All our research students are entitled to £30 of printer credits (enough to print/copy 600 A4 black-and-white pages) per year during the fee-paying period of their registration. Although we encourage students to keep to this limit, we will consider requests for additional credits in a particular year on the firm understanding that the total of £90 over three years will not be exceeded (i.e. additional printer credits in one year mean fewer in the next).

**University news, events, dates, etc.**

You probably already have a favourite homepage, but it’s well worth considering making the Warwick home page your default setting during your stay, if only to ensure that you check it regularly for news and updates. If you decide to use another default homepage, at least make the Warwick page one of your tabs or add it to your favourites: you will find it very useful to check it regularly.

**IT support and training**

The [IT Services](#) webpage is an invaluable site for all aspects of IT. It includes a link to updates on what’s happening on the IT front in the university, as well as covering a range of issues from buying computers to email, passwords and using web-authoring programmes. It also offers various ways of contacting IT services. A particularly valuable link from the main page is to the IT Training pages, where you’ll find courses on all aspects of your IT work and for all levels of expertise.

**Medical matters**

All students should be registered with a doctor who has a surgery near their residence. There is a health clinic on campus and students who live on campus can register with a doctor at the [University Health Centre](#). You are also advised to register with a dentist, as it can sometimes be difficult to find one at short notice in an emergency. The Student Union [Advice Centre](#) provides useful information on various health matters including how to register with a doctor or a dentist.
Employment and career
Unitemps is the online temporary staff agency established by the University of Warwick. It offers a range of work to students at Warwick who may wish to finance themselves during their studies and many of our research students have found part-time work by this route.

If you would like advice on your career, the Student Careers & Skills site includes useful links covering different aspects of careers and job applications.

Sports and activities
Here are a few useful pages to help you find out what is available:

- For sports, check out the Sport at Warwick webpage or the Students’ Union Sports page.
- Find out about other activities and societies via the Students’ Union website.
- If you’re interested in music, the Music Centre pages are very helpful.

Accommodation
If you have problems with your accommodation (e.g. with noise) and are staying in one of the university residences, you should raise these in the first instance with the residential staff. If this does not resolve the problem, you can consult the Head of Student Support and Student Support team, who can help with accommodation problems as well as giving advice on personal, financial or family problems. Practical issues can be addressed to the University’s Accommodation Office.

Learned associations
You may be interested in joining one or more of the learned associations in our field. This will give you the opportunity to meet more people who are interested in your area of research and allow you to subscribe to an e-mail list where you can read and participate in discussions on current topics of interest.

People who can help
Your closest relationship during your studies will be with your supervisor, who will be able to give you general advice and answer questions relating to your own academic work, other than library issues. If you wish to raise a personal matter and would prefer not to direct this to your supervisor, you can contact your adviser. Serious academic issues can be referred to the Senior Tutor. These would include appeals against academic decisions, difficulties in your relationship with your supervisor or adviser, or problems relating to the termination of your registration.

Advice on a range of issues including accommodation, health and finances can be obtained from the Students’ Union Advice service.

If you have more serious personal problems, you may need to contact the Counselling Service, which offers face-to-face, email and group counselling, as well as workshops and self-help resources.
3.8 Student Staff Liaison Committee

A very effective way of getting involved in decisions affecting your life at Warwick is to join the Centre’s Student Staff Liaison Committee (SSLC) for research students. This committee meets regularly during term time to discuss student issues and respond to concerns raised by staff or students. In the past it has been very effective in pressing for more PhD study rooms and computer provision, as well as putting forward suggestions for training for SSLC members. It is also instrumental in organising social events and the annual research student conference.

The SSLC webpage includes a link to minutes of previous meetings, which will give you a sense of the issues discussed when the committee meets. If you would like more information on the work of these committees, you will find the Student Union SSLC page useful.

3.9 Conference attendance and participation

You can expect to take part in an annual Warwick Postgraduate International Conference in Applied Linguistics, organised by research students themselves, where our students, visiting speakers and research students from other institutions present papers based on their work. This is attended by the Centre staff, research students and interested guests and in the past has proved to be very exciting and informative. It provides an opportunity for you to showcase your work, share your insights and ideas with others and get a sense of the wide spread of interests and achievement in research.

You are also encouraged to attend conferences held by learned associations and professional groups, particularly when they are on themes related to your work. As part of its commitment to the development of a research culture, the Centre offers funding towards conference fees and expenses to research students who are presenting papers on the subject of their research. In your first year, the Centre will fund conference attendance (with or without giving a paper) provided that this is relevant to your research. After this, in order to be considered for funding, you will need to have had a paper accepted for presentation for a conference. The level of funding is designed to reflect the development of your research project and the evaluation stages that reflect this. As a result, the amount of funding available increases each year (but note that you cannot ‘hold over’ money from one year to the next, except in Years 3 to 4):

- Year 1 £150
- Year 2 £250
- Year 3 £500 (this amount can be spread across Years 3 and 4)

There is no automatic right to funding and each case is assessed on its merits, but if your proposal has been accepted for a conference, you are encouraged to apply for funding by completing a Conference Funding Form (downloadable from the CAL Student Hub for research students). All applications must be made well in advance of your attendance at the conference so that a final decision can be made before you leave.
There may be additional sources of funding for different conferences and you should explore the relevant conference websites for details of these. For example, BAAL (British Association for Applied Linguistics) provides a number of competitive scholarships for postgraduate students who are giving a paper.

If the conference is overseas, the University will provide you with insurance cover (but please note that this does not apply to UK travel). Further details are available on the University’s Travel Insurance page, from where you can also download the Travel Pack and Card (which you should take with you when you travel), as well as the necessary claim forms (should you need to submit a claim).

3.10 Overseas Travel

In relation to travel, if you are planning to travel outside the UK while registered on our full-time MPhil/PhD programme (e.g. for holiday, conference, research fieldwork or job interview purposes, we ask that you complete an Overseas Travel Form (downloadable from the CAL Student Hub) and submit it to the CAL office before you leave. Please understand that the Overseas Travel Form is not a request for permission to travel but simply a means for us to ensure that we have the necessary information and contact details should anything happen to you during an overseas trip or should we need to get in touch with you in an emergency. The form will need to be signed off by your supervisor as it is important for them to be informed. The Overseas Travel Form applies to all full-time students during vacations as well as term-time.

In addition, for international students on Tier 4 visas who are travelling outside the UK for more than three months, we are required to notify Student Records, who will inform UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI) that there has been ‘a change of study location’. This will not affect your student and visa status. However, it is essential that you notify the CAL office after you have returned to the UK so that your record with the UKVI can be amended. Otherwise, you will continue to be registered under ‘change of study location’ and may run into problems later with your student and visa status.
4 The supervision process

The relationship between you and your supervisor(s) will necessarily be a very close one, developing over three to four years (or five to seven years in the case of part-time students). It will have a significant impact on your work so it’s very important to understand how to get the best out of it.

This section is designed to introduce you to the supervision process and to explain to you some of the assumptions and arrangements relating to it. However, it’s very important to understand that there is no one way of being a good supervisor, or indeed a good student: all supervisors have their own style and their own way of doing things, so what you will read in this section is meant as a guide rather than as a rigid set of rules. Of course, if your supervisor adopts an approach very different from the one you were expecting and you are concerned about this, you should certainly raise this issue with them in order to discuss your concerns and work towards a shared understanding and commitment.

4.1 Your supervisor

Your supervisor will have seen your application for a place on the programme, including your proposal, and may even have discussed the latter with you. The process of assigning supervisors is treated very seriously in the Centre and you can be confident that the person with whom you are working has a genuine interest in the area of your research.

Technically, you will have two supervisors, a main supervisor and a second supervisor. However, this arrangement does not reflect the nature of the supervisory relationship — your meetings and exchanges will be with your main supervisor — but rather the importance of ensuring continuity of supervision. Because you have been assigned a second supervisor, you can be confident that if your first supervisor leaves the university or is absent for any length of time (e.g. because of study leave or in the case of illness) there will be someone who is following the progress of your research and able to provide continuity of support.

The following summary is designed to help you understand how the responsibilities of your two supervisors are divided, though it is designed only as a guide. In some cases the two supervisors share a more equal role, or occasionally the main and second supervisors may swap roles in response to your evolving needs.

Main Supervisor

- Supervises the student in accordance with the University rules and guidance.
- Arranges for regular supervision tutorials and ensures that a report on each meeting is filed and retained, and also copied to the second supervisor.
- Helps the student to prepare for first year and Upgrade panels, usually participates in the first year panel, and takes appropriate action based on the outcome of both panels.
- Makes arrangements for the appointment of an external examiner.
Second Supervisor

- Receives copies of supervision tutorial reports.
- Participates in the first year panel and produces a report on the student’s performance with appropriate recommendations.
- Reads the report submitted by the student for the Upgrade panel and where appropriate provides feedback on this, but does not sit on the panel itself.
- May be involved in supervision tutorials if specific expertise is needed.
- Reads a copy of the final draft of the thesis (or selected chapters from the thesis where appropriate) and provides feedback on this.
- Covers for the main supervisor when the latter is on study leave or absent for a significant period of time.

One of the biggest adjustments that research students have to make involves the shift of responsibility in terms of the work they are expected to do. For this reason, it is important to appreciate from the start of your studies the nature of the thesis you will eventually produce. This is summed up in the following statement:

A thesis is an individual and original piece of work for which you are entirely responsible.

Your supervisor will be there to advise, guide and support you, helping you to work to the best of your ability. However, it is not the supervisor’s job to police your work or take responsibility for your thesis. Of course, supervisors know what is expected in a good thesis and will advise you accordingly, monitoring your progress towards this goal and alerting you if they think you are moving forward too slowly. They will also provide advice and feedback on your writing, but you alone have the final responsibility for completing your work and for its quality.

Your supervisor will not be one of your examiners. When your thesis is completed, your work and your knowledge of the subject will be examined by two independent examiners, one from Warwick and the other from a different university.

We hope that you will establish a good working relationship with your supervisor. At times, however, there may be strains on this. For example, you might be under pressure and may feel uncomfortable if your supervisor is trying to push you to do even more work. At other times, you may feel ready to go ahead with a section of your research and your supervisor may suggest that you hold back and do more reading. At such times, it is a good idea to discuss things and find out the reasons for these differences. In the end, the decision will be yours and your supervisor will respect this, but it is worth remembering that your supervisor will have lots of experience of the research process and will have your best interests in mind.

*Note that the Director of Graduate Studies is always available to talk confidentially with you about any concerns you may have about your progress or the supervision process, and will invite you to do so particularly during the first year.*
Most students find that they get on well with their supervisor, even when the going gets rough, and supervisors do their best to accommodate students’ needs. Please remember, though, that academics in British universities are very busy and have to lecture, mark, complete sometimes complex and time-consuming administrative tasks, and do their own research, in addition to supervising your work – so please try to respect arrangements for meetings, submission of work, etc., and please try not to drop in on your supervisor on a casual basis. And if you know that you will be away or unavailable for a week or more, please make sure that you let your supervisor and the Research Degrees Administrator know.

Although it is technically possible to change supervisors, this is very rare indeed and allowed only in exceptional circumstance. For details of the procedures which are followed in such cases, see Section 10: ‘Some Important Questions’.

4.2 Your responsibilities as a research student

A full list of your responsibilities as described by the University is provided in the Graduate School’s Guidelines on the Supervision and Monitoring of Research Degree Students. The much briefer description below summarises what we take to be particularly important. Obviously, circumstances vary, so at different points in the research process some of these will be more salient than others, but taken together they should give you a sense of the sorts of things that will be expected of you by your supervisor.

Your supervisor will expect you to

- reach an agreement about the time and number of tutorials and attend regularly at the appointed time;
- work consistently, steadily and independently;
- give in written work at the appointed time;
- take note of the guidance and feedback on your work and recognise that your supervisor’s role is to offer advice on the academic content, structure and presentation of your work but that it does not extend to providing detailed corrections of your written English;
- discuss any problems or worries with them;
- attend taught courses, lectures or other formal instruction as required;
- notify them if you are ill or if for any other reason you are unable to work or attend tutorials or seminars;
- participate in the activities of one of the Centre’s research groups and attend the annual Warwick Postgraduate Students’ Conference;
- meet your research deadlines;
- dedicate an appropriate amount of time to your research (approximately 40 hours a week for a full-time student).

You must also ensure that your supervisor knows your address, e-mail address and phone number so that you can be contacted. This information should also be given to the Research Degrees Administrator and the Graduate Office. You must notify them of any changes, and any absences from campus.
4.3 Your supervisor’s responsibilities

A full list of the supervisor’s responsibilities as described by the University is provided in the Graduate School’s [Guidelines on the Supervision and Monitoring of Research Degree Students](#). The much briefer description below summarises what we take to be particularly important and should give you a sense of what sort of guidance to expect.

Your supervisors will:

- agree with you about times of regular tutorials;
- advise you on working methods;
- recommend readings to start you on your studies;
- help you to refine the focus of your research and set realistic deadlines for your studies;
- suggest tasks for you to complete before your next tutorial;
- request written work from you;
- read your work and give you constructive feedback on it;
- advise you on training and development opportunities and where appropriate draw your attention to other sources of support and information;
- advise you if your progress is inadequate or your work is below the required standard and inform the Graduate Progress Committee of this;
- explain to you the University requirements concerning reports, upgrading and the examining system;
- advise you if they expect to be away from the university for an extended period.

4.4 Supervision meetings and records

During your first few weeks as a research student, as well as helping you refine your research proposal, your supervisor will discuss your plan of work and your objectives and tell you about research seminars and other opportunities for you to meet your fellow research students. *If you hold an ESRC DTC studentship, your supervisor will also discuss your training needs at the beginning of the year and help you complete the requisite training needs analysis form.*

Your supervisor will also arrange to meet you regularly to discuss your work. The number and length of tutorials will vary depending on the type of work you are undertaking and the amount of help you need. Supervisors may meet first year research students 3-5 times a term, but this is not a rule and you may meet more or less frequently. Similarly, while some supervisors prefer to meet only during term time, others prefer fewer meetings in term time but are prepared to meet during vacations. Depending on circumstances, tutorials may also take place via Skype (e.g. if you are away for an extended period doing fieldwork or are a part-time student based overseas), or there may be other forms of supervision contact such as via email or telephone. The Graduate School guidelines stipulate *at least one such contact per month* throughout the year for full-time PhD students.
Between tutorials you will be asked to undertake specific tasks and the assumption will be that you will be able to complete these without additional support in time for the next tutorial. Sometimes, however, unexpected and urgent problems arise between tutorials which mean that it is essential to contact your supervisor. At the start of the supervision process your supervisor will agree with you procedures for such contact and you should try to follow these. For example, many supervisors prefer their supervisees to make contact in the first instance by email, either to resolve the problem directly or arrange a time for a meeting or telephone call.

After each tutorial you will be asked to complete a simple supervision record sheet (downloadable from the CAL Student Hub). Each new record sheet should be numbered clearly by filename (e.g. yourname 1, yourname 2, etc.) and a copy of the completed record sheet should be emailed to your supervisor, who will return it to you (with additions or comments), copied to the Research Degrees Administrator and your second supervisor.

Occasionally, it may be useful to discuss some aspect of your research with another staff member of the Centre (though such instances are not common). For example, another colleague may have experience of dealing with an unusual aspect of data collection or analysis and therefore may be able to provide insights into the challenges or opportunities it presents. Usually in such cases your supervisor will suggest a meeting, although it is legitimate to propose this yourself. If this happens, please take your supervisor’s advice about the usefulness or otherwise of such a meeting and do not approach the colleague yourself unless your supervisor has agreed to this: this is not only a breach of academic etiquette, it can also lead to confusion and crossed wires. Please give your supervisor the opportunity to make the first approach. Where this has happened in the past, it has sometimes been possible to arrange ad hoc workshops where research students have benefited from an exchange of ideas and experiences with an expert.

4.5 Setting research targets and managing your time

As a new research student, you are probably most concerned about the intellectual challenges ahead, but by far the greatest challenge you will face is the amount of work you will have to complete in order to produce a successful thesis. Three years seems a great deal of time, but it will pass more quickly than you can imagine, and if you do not plan carefully and organise your time effectively you may well face serious difficulties further along the line. The best response, therefore, is to quickly get into the habit of organising your studies and planning ahead. Everyone has their own preferred methods of scheduling, but all effective planning depends on setting clear targets. Your supervisor will be on hand to advise and guide you in this, but you will need to ensure that you are meeting your own objectives and deadlines. Most students find it helpful to have three sets of objectives: long-, medium- and short-term:

- Long-term objectives concern your overall plan leading to the submission of your thesis. To set your long-term objectives, consider first the date at which you expect to submit your final draft, bearing in mind that after submission you will have to wait up to three months before the viva. When you have identified a suitable date for submission, consider in broad terms what work needs to be completed each year to reach this point successfully.
• Medium-term objectives relate to your more detailed plans for the year ahead. Decide how you would like to break this down (for example, into months or terms) and allocate specific targets for each segment. Try not to be too optimistic when deciding these: build in slippage time and don’t forget to allow for holidays and other breaks. Always remember that it is very encouraging to achieve targets before the anticipated completion date but that it is demotivating to fall behind and have to play ‘catch up’. If you discover in the first few months that your initial plan was unrealistic, don’t be afraid to revise it in the light of experience, but try to ensure that this revision is the last.

• Short-term objectives concern what you intend to do immediately, so they break down easily into specific tasks. Your tutorial record provides a useful basis for deciding on these and the target date might be the next meeting with your supervisor, a research seminar, or the deadline for the submission of a proposal.

The way you organise your studies will depend very much on the nature of the tasks on which you will be engaged. Most students find it helpful to divide up their activities in order to build in as much variety as possible, for example by mixing mundane tasks such as transcription with more creative ones such as developing a critique or line of analysis, or by spending part of each day working on receptive tasks, like reading, and part of the day on productive tasks, like writing or planning. Occasionally, though, you may find that you need to concentrate on the same task for an extended period (e.g. when working on some aspect of analysis), in which case variety could be distracting. In situations like this, be particularly careful to build in opportunities for rest and leisure activities.

There is no fixed rule about how much to work, and different stages call for different degrees of commitment, but full-time students should expect to work for about 40 hours a week on average. The Graduate School guidelines state that full-time students should expect to devote 1800 hours per annum to their studies.

4.6 Annual reports

Each year you will be asked by the Graduate School to complete an online report on your progress. Your supervisor will also complete part of this. The aim of the report is to give you the opportunity to evaluate your progress and your experience as a research student, so it provides a useful opportunity to reflect on your work and the extent to which you are meeting the targets you have set for yourself. Some students receiving funding may also be required by their sponsor to complete report forms at agreed points during their period of registration. Your supervisor will be happy to contribute to this process if required.

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5 Ethical approval

Ethical standards are as important as academic standards. It is the duty of a researcher to ensure that no harm comes to anyone involved in their research and that the rights of all participants are properly respected. In order to ensure that research in the Centre meets the very highest ethical standards, we have developed strict approval procedures which must be followed by all researchers, whether staff or students. The University has developed a clear set of procedures for ensuring full ethical scrutiny and the Centre’s own procedures conform to the standards specified in these. In order to give you a sense of the broader picture, the first part of this section provides you with some extracts from the University’s Statement on Ethical Conduct of Research. This is followed by a summary of the procedure which you will be expected to follow. The final part provides a brief introduction to the issue of consent.

Please ensure that you study this section very carefully at the point where you have completed, or are in the process of completing, your plans for data collection.

5.1 Extracts from the University’s Statement

‘The University of Warwick is committed to advancing and safeguarding the highest academic and ethical standards in all its research activities.’

‘On the 1st October 2003 the University of Warwick Council approved the establishment of a Research Governance & Ethics Committee (RGAEC) to govern ethical policy and establish a research governance framework across the University. We are working closely with senior academics and administrative staff to ensure all members of staff and students conducting and participating in research activity that involves participants, their data and/or tissue adopt the University’s Research Code of Practice, Code of Practice for the Investigation of Research Misconduct, and Whistleblowing Code of Practice.’

‘It is the responsibility of staff and students to consider the ethical implications of their research using the Research Code of Practice and all relevant guidelines of appropriate professional bodies to assist them in fulfilling their obligations.’

‘The dignity, rights, safety and well-being of participants must be the primary consideration in any research project.’

5.2 Ethical approval in the Centre

All research students in the Centre for Applied Linguistics are required to obtain ethical approval for their projects before beginning data collection. Advice on this is available as part of the research training programme and from supervisors. As part of this process you will be required to complete an Ethical Approval Form (downloadable from the CAL Student Hub) as fully as possible.

The steps in the process are as follows:
1. The student specifies the ethical issues arising from the project and how these will be addressed. This is submitted on the Ethical Approval form with the proposal for the project.

2. The supervisor reviews the Ethical Approval form and either recommends approval or advises the student to resubmit the form. If the supervisor is not satisfied, the relevant issues will be explored with the student, who will then be asked to submit a revised proposal in line with the supervisor’s recommendations.

3. When the form has been signed by the supervisor, he or she passes an electronic copy to the Research Degrees Administrator, who places it on the student’s file and passes a copy to the Centre’s research ethics officer.

4. All ethical forms are considered by the Centre’s research ethics officer or Director of Graduate Studies, who may identify issues for consideration at the next meeting of the Graduate Progress Committee.

5. The proposal and, where appropriate, the comments of the research ethics officer or Director of Graduate Studies are considered at the next meeting of the Graduate Progress Committee, which may recommend further action.

You will not be expected to complete the relevant form until you have a clear plan for data collection, and your supervisor will be able to advise you on the right time to begin the process of seeking ethical approval. Under no circumstances should you begin data collection until the full process has been completed and you have received clearance.

Data collection must not begin until the Ethical Approval Form has been approved by Graduate Progress Committee or, in exceptional cases, by Chair’s action.

5.3 Informed consent

The process of gaining informed consent is at the heart of good ethical practice and you will have the opportunity to explore and discuss the issues associated with it as part of your research induction process. At the end of the process, the participants in your research should be aware of what is expected of them and of their rights (e.g. to withdrawal without penalty, to confidentiality) and should be asked to sign a form consenting to their participation in the research.

This is something you will need to discuss with your supervisor at the appropriate time, in order to explore all the relevant issues and produce an appropriate consent form. You can prepare your own, but this can be very time-consuming because you will need to ensure that it meets the minimum standards required for such a form. It is much quicker – and safer – to use or adapt the template consent form prepared by the University’s Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Sub-Committee (HSSREC), which is also downloadable from the CAL Student Hub.
To accompany the form you will need to prepare an information sheet and should use the guidance provided by the HSSREC to help you do this. Again, you will need to discuss this with your supervisor in order to ensure that your description is clear and accurate.

If your research involves video recording, you may wish to supplement these with something along the lines of the form suggested by Susan Ervin-Tripp (downloadable from the CAL Student Hub). Whether or not you use this form in whole or in part (with due acknowledgement to its author) is a matter of judgement and your supervisor will be able to advise you on this.

6 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a form of cheating and constitutes a very serious offence in the academic world. It takes different forms, but in essence it involves using the work of someone else without acknowledgement, as the following definitions make clear:

‘the wrongful appropriation or purloining, and publication as one’s own, of the ideas, or the expression of the ideas (literary, artistic, musical, mechanical, etc.) of another.’

(Oxford English Dictionary)

‘the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one’s own original work.’

(Wikipedia)

Some cases of plagiarism, such as pretending that someone else’s research is your own or copying whole paragraphs or pages from a book or paper without acknowledging the source, are very clear and can only be deliberate, but plagiarism worries many very honest students because it can also be accidental. The following types of plagiarism, taken from plagiarism.org, will give you an idea of the range it can cover:

- turning in someone else’s work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not

(http://www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/what-is-plagiarism)
As you can see, some of these might be the result of a genuine mistake, and where this is obviously the case examiners may be understanding, provided that it is an isolated instance. However, you will be expected to take every precaution to avoid plagiarism and a failure to do so will leave you open to censure.

One way of doing this is to take great care with your note-taking. Here are three simple rules to bear in mind:

- Before you begin to take notes, write down full details of the relevant publication and make sure that the notes can always be associated with this information (i.e. that each page can be identified as part of the set).
- When copying anything directly from the text, always put quotation marks round it and include page numbers in brackets after it.
- Whenever reading notes you have made, always assume that anything not in quotation marks is a direct paraphrase.

Paraphrasing sometimes causes problems for students, leading to a defence along the lines of 'But it’s my own words.' However, summarising someone else's position without acknowledging that the arguments are theirs is also a form of plagiarism, even though the words may have been changed. If in doubt, acknowledge. It’s easier for your supervisor to suggest that in a particular case acknowledgement may not be needed (for example, because reference has already been made to the relevant work or because the statement is common property) than it is for them to identify a case of unacknowledged summarising.

The issue of 'common goods' is a tricky one. Some terms or concepts are so widely used that they effectively become common property, in which case direct acknowledgement is not necessary. A good example is ‘communicative language teaching’, which is effectively part of our shared vocabulary. Cases where it’s hard to identify a single individual responsible for the relevant term are unproblematic, but where a source can be identified the situation may be less straightforward. For example, Geertz first used the term ‘thick description’, and for some time after this appeared it could be used only with a reference to its source. However, over time this became so widely used, and Geertz’s contribution so widely recognised, that it effectively became part of the common vocabulary of researchers doing fieldwork. As a result, many writers now use it without acknowledgement, though some still include a reference to its original source. In cases like this, unless you are absolutely sure of your ground (i.e. you’ve seen the term widely used without acknowledgement of its source), always include the original source and leave it to your supervisor to decide whether you need to do this.

If you are careful about your note-taking and referencing, and honest in your approach, plagiarism need not worry you. Even if you are concerned about this in the early stages of your work, you will find that these concerns gradually fade as you become familiar with the process of researching and writing, and are able to identify problematic areas with confidence.

Nevertheless, at this stage it is well worth spending a little time getting to know more about the topic. You can begin with the gentle introduction on Warwick’s own Plagiarism webpages. These have been imaginatively designed and are not only informative but quite entertaining. A more detailed exploration of the issues can be found on the plagiarism.org site, which you should certainly explore.
7 Problems with progress

When we consider your application for a place on our doctoral programme, we do our best to ensure that you are well placed to complete the programme successfully. The investment you are expected to make, in terms of time, effort and expense, means that you will not have entered into it lightly and are confident that you have the qualities required to produce a successful outcome. However, life is not entirely predictable and three years is a long time, so it may be that at some point your progress on the programme becomes problematic, perhaps due to external events or possibly as a result of changes in your own needs or perspectives. Whatever the case, if it becomes necessary to re-evaluate your progress on the programme, you need to be aware of the relevant regulations and procedures. This section is designed to introduce you to these.

If you progress normally, it will not be necessary to read this section, so you may prefer to set it aside for now and consult it only if you have concerns about your progress.

The section is divided into four parts. The first is a very brief introduction to normal progress on the MPhil/PhD programme, further details of which are available in the relevant sections of this handbook. The second part deals with situations where circumstances mean that you need to withdraw temporarily from the programme or where you need an extension to your period of registration. The third part explains what happens if your progress on the programme is regarded as unsatisfactory, and the final part discusses situations where your registration may be terminated.

In all cases, we recommend that you consult the Graduate School Guidelines on the Supervision and Monitoring of Research Degree Students, and the University’s Regulation 38 Governing Research Degrees.

7.1 Normal progress

Normal progress is divided into three stages, each one ending with an assessment of work completed. The stages are summarised below in months and cover the maximum possible time before assessment (for example, the Upgrade panel can take place after as little as one year if circumstances are appropriate):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Full-time</th>
<th>Part-time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>01-09 months</td>
<td>Registration to First Panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-18 months</td>
<td>First Panel to Upgrade Panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19-33 months</td>
<td>Upgrade Panel to Submission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35/36 months</td>
<td>Viva</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If your studies progress normally, you should have an idea of how your work is progressing at the end of each of these stages, your work having been assessed by at least one person other than your main supervisor. However, if your work does not develop in the way that you expect and circumstances mean that you are unable to complete the stages in the time allowed, you may need to request further time. The next section explains what this involves.
7.2 Suspending or extending your studies

Problems with your work may emerge during your progress towards completion or at the end of your studies. In the case of the former you will need to request a temporary withdrawal from your studies, but where you find you are unable to complete your thesis on time it may be possible to obtain an extension (though for students who began their MPhil/PhD after August 2011 and are automatically registered for four years, extensions are likely to be granted by the Graduate School only under very exceptional circumstances).

There are two situations in which it is possible to apply for temporary withdrawal from your studies:

1. on health grounds (or for maternity leave), in which case medical evidence is required;
   or
2. on academic or personal grounds, where the department is of the view that temporary withdrawal would be advantageous.

The first is clear enough, but the second is more open and allows for situations where circumstances are beyond a student’s control. However, this does not include deciding to return to work for a period or simply taking time off to rest. If you think you need to suspend your studies, you should discuss this with your supervisor who will then ask you to complete the Graduate School’s Temporary Withdrawal Form (downloadable from the CAL Student Hub). This is then passed, with a note from your supervisor, to the Director of Graduate Studies, who makes a formal request on your behalf to the Graduate School. The period of suspension may last for up to 12 months and in exceptional cases this may be extended to a maximum of two years where there are clear medical grounds for this.

Note that if you are an international student on a Tier 4 visa for which a CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies) was issued, the University will be obliged to stop sponsoring you during your period of suspension and this means you will be required to leave the UK. You will be issued with another CAS to apply for a new Tier 4 visa for re-entry to the UK when you resume your studies. Before applying for temporary withdrawal, it is a good idea to seek advice from the University’s Immigration Service.

Please note that during the period of temporary withdrawal supervision is not provided and attendance at any lectures, seminars or tutorials is not permitted. However, you will continue to have full access to the university’s IT and library facilities and resources.
For students who began their MPhil/PhD after August 2011: You will be expected to submit your thesis within the three-year fee-paying period of your registration (or five-year fee-paying period for part-time students), but the University recognises that in some cases the writing-up process may take longer than anticipated and therefore allows a further ‘submission pending’ year. Any further extension beyond four years (seven years part-time) will be not possible except in truly exceptional circumstances.

For students who began their MPhil/PhD before August 2011: You will be expected to submit your thesis within the three-year period of your registration (or five years for part-time students), but the University recognises that in some cases the writing-up process may take longer than anticipated and therefore allows an automatic three-month extension if necessary. If you need an extension beyond this period (up to a maximum of nine months), you will need to submit a request to the Graduate School. If you find yourself in this situation, you should first discuss your circumstances with your supervisor and prepare the necessary documents. In addition to a formal request from you, these will include:

1. a letter of support from your supervisor;
2. a realistic work plan agreed with your supervisor for completion of the thesis within the proposed period of extension;
3. any relevant supporting documents (e.g. medical note).

All the documents should be forwarded to the Director of Graduate Studies, who will submit a formal request on your behalf to the Graduate School. Any further extension request beyond nine months (i.e. four years in total) will not be possible except in truly exceptional circumstances.

[If you have been granted an extension and are living in Coventry, you may receive a demand for the payment of Council Tax. This is because only full-time students are exempt from Council Tax and students in extension are technically not in this category. The Graduate School Office is required to record all students in a period of extension as ‘Writing-up, previously full-time’ (code 43) because a period of extension does not constitute full-time study by funding council definitions. If you are in extension, it will therefore not be possible for the University to provide you with a letter stating that you are a full-time student, and you should bear this in mind in your financial planning.]

7.3 Unsatisfactory progress

In the unlikely event that you fail to make adequate progress in your studies, there are procedures in place to alert you to this and to give you every opportunity to get back on track. However, if you do not produce sufficient work of adequate quality, you may eventually be required to withdraw from the programme.

The most common points at which such a situation might become apparent are at the panel stages of the programme. However, in exceptional cases, your supervisor might decide that action in advance of these points is necessary.

If you are an MPhil/PhD student and your first panel report is unsatisfactory, you will have the chance to discuss any reasons for this with the panel and to resubmit. You will be given a list of the changes to your report that would be required for a successful resubmission. Should this resubmission be unacceptable and there are
serious concerns about your progress on the programme, a meeting will be arranged with the Director of the Centre, the Director of Graduate Studies and your supervisor at which a decision will be made about your progress. All options will be considered, but if the result is that the Centre decides to recommend the termination of your studies, the Graduate School will be consulted and the matter will be referred to the Continuation of Registration Committee.

If your Upgrade panel report is unsatisfactory, you will have the chance to discuss any reasons for this with the panel and to resubmit. You will be given a list of the changes to your report that would be required for a successful resubmission. Should this resubmission be unacceptable, you will be recommended either for progression to an MPhil or for withdrawal from the programme. In the case of the latter, the matter will be referred to the Continuation of Registration Committee, which will make the final decision.

In exceptional circumstances a supervisor may alert the Director of Graduate Studies and/or the Graduate Progress committee to concerns about a student’s progress. In this case, in the first instance there will be a meeting involving you, your supervisor and the Director of Graduate Studies where you will have the opportunity to discuss any factors that might be affecting your progress. All possible responses to this will be considered, one of which is that you will be asked to submit evidence of written work (details of which will be specified) by a given date. This will then be read by both of your supervisors and an independent reader. If it is unsatisfactory, you will be given a list of required changes and required to resubmit your work by a specified time. If this resubmission is still unsatisfactory, a meeting will be arranged with the Director of the Centre, the Director of Graduate Studies and your supervisor at which a decision will be made about your progress. All options will be considered, but if the result is that the Centre decides to recommend the termination of your studies, the Graduate School will be consulted and the matter will be referred to the Continuation of Registration Committee.

To summarise, before the registration of any student is terminated, the following procedures will have taken place:

- a review of work involving at least one independent reader, with the opportunity to resubmit this responding to a list of required changes;
- at least two meetings involving the Director of Graduate Studies and your supervisor at which you will have the opportunity to discuss factors affecting your progress;
- consultation with the Graduate School;
- consideration of the case for termination by the Continuation of Registration Committee.

Should you wish to appeal against an academic decision (e.g. a failure to be upgraded), you have the right to do so and should consult Regulation 38 Governing Research Degrees on the grounds for appeal, and follow the formal appeal procedures outlined by the Academic Registrar’s Office.
7.4 Unexplained absence

In all the above cases the student is directly involved in the process leading to the relevant action, but the University also makes provision for situations where students absent themselves from the university and do not make contact with their supervisor or the administration.

The most straightforward situation is where a student fails to re-enrol. All students are required to re-enrol at the beginning of each academic year, and if you fail to do this the Graduate School will contact the Centre. If neither the office nor your supervisor have been able to contact you and cannot explain why you have not re-enrolled, the Graduate School will send you a letter explaining that you will be treated as permanently withdrawn unless, within a stated time, you complete your re-enrolment or explain why you have failed to do this.

There may be other situations where you do not contact your supervisor or the office and do not respond to emails from them, for example at the end of suspension of studies, an extension, or the time allowed for the resubmission of your thesis. Obviously, in such cases we will make every effort to contact you, but if we are still unsuccessful after a period of at least six weeks (the period specified by the Graduate School is five), we will inform the Graduate School. They will then write to you notifying you that you will be deemed to have permanently withdrawn from the programme unless you make contact with them within a prescribed period of time. (Please note also that if you are here on a Tier 4 student visa and are absent without communication for a prolonged period, the University is obliged to notify the UK Visa and Immigration Office.)

Such cases are extremely rare, and we hope and expect that you will not find yourself in this situation. We would be particularly upset if such a situation were to arise because your contact details had changed and you had simply forgotten to inform us, so please make sure that you always provide us with up-to-date information on your movements and how you can be contacted.

7.5 Extenuating Circumstances

The University has drafted advice on the presentation of extenuating circumstances. Although this is designed for postgraduate taught programmes rather than doctoral programmes, we feel that the general principles apply in both cases, so we have included the relevant extract below:

Extenuating or mitigating circumstances are those events which have had a detrimental effect on your study, to the point that it is in your interest to draw your department’s attention to them and ask for them to be considered in mitigation of poor performance. Such circumstances include (but are not limited to) illness, both bodily and emotional; the severe illness or death of a close family member; a shocking or traumatic personal experience. In addition, sudden, unexpected changes in family circumstances might affect your ability to make academic progress as a consequence of their demonstrable emotional impact upon you, and may also be considered as mitigation.
The University is aware that in some cultures it is considered shameful or embarrassing to disclose the details of these kinds of circumstances to those outside one’s family. This is not the case in the prevailing UK culture and you should be aware that your department and the University are fully supportive of students in difficult circumstances and want to assist if at all possible. If you feel inhibited from talking to a tutor or other member of staff in the first instance, you may also consider talking to a member of your SSLC, the Students’ Union, the University Senior Tutor or a member of staff in Student Support for initial, informal advice.

You should be aware that, in the event you feel you need to appeal the outcome of a panel, offering extenuating or mitigating circumstances at that point will need to be accompanied by a good reason why you withheld the information earlier. Without wanting to invade your privacy, the University does expect that you bring such circumstances to your department’s attention in a timely manner, despite the discomfort you might feel in so doing. Failure to disclose such circumstances at a time when you could have done so may subsequently be problematic. Your department will do all it can to support you in difficult situations.
8 The MPhil/PhD programme

This section concentrates on the key stages in a PhD programme. It begins with an overview of a typical research trajectory, identifying characteristic features of each stage and noting the relevant assessment points. This is followed by some notes on the nature of doctoral studies. The core of the section focuses on the three key assessment points: the first panel, the Upgrade panel and the viva. It concludes with a brief note for part-time students.

8.1 The research trajectory

When you applied for a place on the MPhil/PhD programme, you were asked to write a proposal for your research. In this you will have identified the area or areas in which you wish to work and you will have thought about the type of research you would like to undertake. Your supervisor will have been appointed on the basis of this and it will form the basis of your early meetings, as you refine your topic, begin the process of reviewing the relevant literature, and engage with methodological issues. During this process you will attend research methods sessions which will help you see your own study in a broader research context and give you the opportunity to engage with other students at the same stage as you.

- At the end of this first stage, after about eight or nine months on the programme, you will have your first panel.

If your first panel is satisfactory, you will move onto the second stage of your research where much of your energy will be directed towards data collection and beginning the process of analysis.

- At the end of the second stage, between 15 and 18 months into your studies, you will have an Upgrade panel. If this is successful, you will be registered as a PhD student, though in rare cases the panel may decide that a project is more suitable for an MPhil degree.

Once you are upgraded, you will complete your analysis and move on to the important stage of identifying and presenting the specific contribution that your research has made. This may also involve returning to your literature review.

- Finally, after three years of study, you will write up and present your thesis.

Once the thesis has been submitted, it will be sent to the internal and external examiners and a date for a viva will be arranged, typically around a couple of months after the submission date. If the viva is successful, you will be awarded the doctorate, almost inevitably subject to minor amendments. However, if more substantial changes are required you will be asked to resubmit the thesis for re-examination (usually without the need for a further viva).
Here are three key items of information relevant to your studies:

- All students are initially registered as MPhil/PhD students, and formal progression to PhD is subject to a successful Upgrade panel.
- Full time students are normally expected to complete a PhD degree within three years. Part-time students are expected to complete within five years.
- All full-time research students are required to attend timetabled research methods modules for the first two terms.

8.2 The nature of doctoral studies

Section 4 of this handbook addressed issues relating to the supervision process and offered basic advice on organising your studies so these points will not be repeated here. Instead, we offer some brief observations on the nature of doctoral studies that may help you to adjust to the new world of which you are now a part.

As a research student, you will be learning, gradually, how to be a full member of the international academic community. Your primary objective, of course, is to earn the award of a doctorate, but being a successful research student involves much more than this. You should not become too narrowly obsessed with your own work because in the long run this will prove to be a limitation. A successful student will acquire a good broad familiarity with the field, an understanding of a range of research methods, and an ability to engage with fellow researchers on topics of general interest.

This means that you should also use your time as a student to get to know a circle of other people who are interested in the type of work you are doing and in related areas, at Warwick and in other universities. You can do this by attending conferences and meetings and by using the Internet. You can use these contacts to learn about other people’s research and make your own work known to others. This should help you to become an active participant in the relevant discourse communities associated with your work and to understand the issues that are currently attracting particular attention. Then, as your work progresses, you will begin to feel sufficiently confident to present papers at conferences and write articles for publication.

The first year of your MPhil/PhD can be a difficult and challenging stage of the research process, often known as a period of ‘maximum uncertainty’ or confusion, as you try to develop your focus and research questions, position yourself with regard to particular research paradigms and traditions, and articulate the methods and techniques you will use to address your questions. This initial stage of the research process can feel like a lonely struggle, though of course your supervisors will be there to offer advice and help you find your direction. This is part of the reason why we consider attendance on the research methods sessions to be so important.
8.3 Attending taught modules

All full-time MPhil/PhD students are required to attend the research modules on the programme during their first year of registration. These modules will help you to engage with key paradigms of inquiry in research in applied linguistics, understand a range of traditions and approaches, familiarise yourself with various possible methods of collecting and analysing data, and take account of significant issues such as research ethics and access.

We believe that you will find these modules invaluable in providing you with regular opportunities for stimulating discussion and exploration of research issues, while also broadening the scope of your experience and understanding as a researcher. Above all, participation in the modules will help you move through the initial period of ‘maximum uncertainty’, position yourself as a researcher, and identify appropriate methods and tools for your research. A description of the modules can be found in Appendix 3 and preliminary reading lists are available in Appendix 4.

To maximise the benefits of participating in the research modules, we believe it is important for MPhil/PhD students to engage with issues raised through the process of writing. We strongly encourage our research students to begin writing as early as possible during the first year, since the process of writing will help you to clarify your ideas, provide concrete outcomes for discussion with your supervisor and prepare you for the substantial writing that is involved in the production of a thesis.

In addition to any drafts that you begin to produce on your research during the first two terms, your supervisor may also ask you to write a detailed discussion of the following, stemming from your participation in each of the above modules:

- a justification for a research paradigm/tradition that will be important in your work (end of Term 1);
- a justification for the research methods you plan to use (end of Term 2).

These two pieces of writing may then be revised and presented as part of your submission to your first year panel.

Your supervisors may also ask you to attend some MA or MSc modules during your period of work. In some cases this is necessary in order to become up to date in subjects relating to a research project or to establish a broader understanding of the field in general.

ESRC DTC studentship holders will also be required to attend Core Training Modules run by the DTC in accordance with their training analysis needs.

**SAVE ALL DRAFTS OF YOUR WORK ON THE H: DRIVE.**

The H: drive is on the University server and documents saved here are stored safely. We recommend that you work from the H: drive and copy onto hard drives/pen drives etc. because this is the most secure way of working. However, if you choose to work from your own hard drive you should still ensure that the relevant files are then also saved to the H: drive. The University does not accept loss of data as a legitimate reason for late submission or as a basis for an extension request, so it is vital to back up your data on the H: drive.
8.4 Your first panel

Your first panel should be held between eight and ten months of registration, normally around the ninth month. This means that if you initially registered at the end of September it will probably fall around the end of the summer term of your first year. (However, there is some flexibility about timing, especially in the case of DTC studentship holders who spend much of the autumn and spring terms undertaking DTC coursework, and first panels may take place towards the end of Year 1 instead.) The panel will normally comprise your main and second supervisor, or (in cases where supervision is split more evenly between the two) one supervisor and another member of the Centre’s academic staff. Panel members will read your submission, meet with you to discuss this, and provide you with a report of their recommendations. Details of the process itself are provided below.

Your supervisor will advise you on what you will need to submit for your panel. Because all research projects develop in different ways, there are no hard and fast rules about the length of this submission, though a rough guide would be around 10,000 words. A first panel submission should normally include the following:

- an introductory detailed proposal including prospective research schedule;
- a draft of your literature review and/or a discussion of theoretical issues
- a detailed account of the research methods to be used with reasons for their choice (with samples of research tools if applicable);
- a plan of work leading up to completion;
- references, appendices, etc.

It may also include one or more of the following, depending on your research:

- a background chapter;
- the results of a pilot study.

The composition of the written submission and the balance among its different components will depend very much on individual circumstances. For example, for students needing to undertake fieldwork early, more space may be given to discussing practical issues of research design and methodology, and less to theoretical discussion. Note that the substantive components of your first panel submission do not have to constitute fully developed chapters. For example, your ‘literature review’ might comprise a critical discussion of some core theoretical issues relevant to your study, followed by an indicative outline (headings, list of key readings) of further areas to be explored. We also recognise that at this stage final decisions about some aspects of your work may not be possible. Your methodology chapter, for example, may focus on options available to you and your current thinking on these, rather than representing a fully articulated description of your research design.

Note also that your written submission may include notes and questions that you wish to discuss with the panel members or for which you wish seek advice or feedback. Your notes and questions will help shape the panel meeting itself so that the discussion is as helpful as possible for you and your supervisors. In this sense, while your written submission will be formally reviewed by the panel members, the first panel discussion is designed to serve a primarily formative purpose.
The submission and reporting procedures in both the first panel and the Upgrade panel are as follows:

1. Membership of the panel is agreed at a Graduate Progress Committee meeting.
2. The panel members agree a date and time for the panel with the student and inform the Research Degrees Administrator, who then books an appropriate room.
3. The Research Degrees Administrator sends a letter to the student.
4. Two weeks in advance of the panel, the student submits their work (as an email attachment in Word or pdf) to the Research Degrees Administrator, who then makes photocopies for the panel members.
5. Panel members submit their reports on the submission to the Research Degrees Administrator at least 24 hours before panel. Copies are exchanged between panel members (and forwarded also to supervisors if they are not panel members). The reports are treated as confidential and their contents are not discussed with the student in advance of the panel.
6. Panel members submit a joint report on the panel to the Research Degrees Administrator within one week of the panel.
7. If necessary, the student is asked to resubmit and a further panel may be arranged.
8. Panel members submit separate resubmission reports to the Research Degrees Administrator.
9. If the resubmission reports recommend withdrawal from the programme, the Director of the Centre and/or Director of Graduate Studies will attend any subsequent panel.
10. If the recommendation to withdraw remains unchanged, the Director of Graduate Studies prepares a brief report summarising the panel’s reasons for the decision and standard procedures are followed.

You will notice from this that you are expected to submit your work at least two weeks in advance of the panel, so you will need to take this into account in your planning. Although you will not necessarily receive copies of the independent reports, you will receive a list of recommendations. Where the panel members deem that progress has been satisfactory, these will represent comments and suggestions about how you might improve your work, but if progress has been unsatisfactory they will provide details of what changes are required if your resubmission is to be successful. The panel members will usually provide these as a separate list, but where they think you might also benefit from their joint report they will also provide you with a copy of this.

The conduct of the first panel varies slightly depending on whether the panel members include just one or both supervisors. In cases where only one supervisor (i.e. a second supervisor) is on the panel, the main supervisor will also attend the meeting as an observer to take notes.
The panel meeting itself takes the form of an oral discussion about your work, led by the panel members. There will also be an opportunity for you to ask questions or seek advice. When discussions are concluded, you (and your main supervisor if an observer) may be asked to withdraw from the room for a few minutes while the panel members deliberate before communicating their decision to you and talking through any issues arising.

In the unlikely event that you feel that the composition of either the first panel (or the Upgrade panel) is inappropriate, you may request a change in the panel membership, provided that you do this in good time. You will normally be informed of the composition of your panel at the beginning of the term during which it will take place and if you wish to request a change you should submit a formal letter stating your reasons for this to the Director of Graduate Studies. This letter should be submitted as soon as possible after you have been informed of the panel membership and normally at least one month before you are due to meet the panel. As soon as possible after receiving your letter, the Director of Graduate Studies will arrange to meet you to discuss your request. If agreement on suitable panel membership cannot be agreed at this meeting, the matter will be referred to the Director of the Centre, who will then take whatever action is appropriate.

The recommendation of the first panel does not in itself represent a decision about your progress on the programme, which is a separate matter dealt with in accordance with University procedures (see Section 7.3). However, where there are concerns about progress, the outcome of the first panel may be taken into consideration in discussions on this and may be relevant to any decision made.

### 8.5 The Upgrade panel

This is a particularly important panel because the result of it will decide whether you are upgraded to registration as a PhD student. It normally takes place between 15 and 18 months after your initial registration, often at some point in the spring term of Year 2 for students beginning at the end of September. An expected timeframe for the upgrade panel is normally discussed at the first panel.

There will be two panel members, neither of whom will have been involved in the supervision of your work. The submission and reporting procedures are identical to those of the first panel described above.

Your submission for this panel should build substantially on your first submission. Again, there are no rules about length, but a normal submission would be between 20,000 and 30,000 words. The Graduate School’s advice on this panel states that a submission should demonstrate that:

- you have knowledge and skills appropriate to this stage of the research programme;
- you have completed work of a quality to justify continuation;
- your chosen research methods are appropriate and practical;
- the research is likely to make a significant contribution to knowledge;
- a realistic plan is in place for completing the research within the expected timeframe.
Your Upgrade panel submission should normally include:

- a statement explaining the contents of the submission and how it differs from the first panel submission;
- a table of contents;
- a (re-)statement of the context and background of the study, which may be the same as the first panel submission or an updated version;
- a comprehensive literature review. In principle, this could be the same as that in your first panel submission, but in practice it will usually have been developed and refined since then;
- a detailed and substantial account of your research design, methodology and field work, including (where applicable) discussion of any piloting. Since second year students are likely to have spent much of the year on their field work, this account should form a major part of the Upgrade submission;
- data analysis. This should include a detailed explanation of planned methods of analysis, plus a summary of any initial findings;
- a clear statement of your plan of work for the remaining period of registration until completion at the end of the third year of registration (or fifth year for part-time students);
- a full bibliography;
- relevant appendices (e.g. copies of research tools, interview transcripts).

The conduct of the upgrade panel meeting will be broadly similar to that of the first panel, with at least one supervisor (main supervisor) attending as observer. At the panel you will be asked to confirm the title (e.g. PhD in Applied Linguistics and English Language Teaching) which will appear on your degree certificate. This will be the title of the programme for which you originally registered. In exceptional circumstances students may request a change of degree title (e.g. if the focus of their work has shifted significantly since starting their studies), though the decision on whether to grant a course transfer rests with the University. You should also try to ensure that the title of the work-in-progress submitted for the Upgrade panel is the one you intend to use for the final thesis as this will give the panel members the chance to comment on the wording if they have any concerns about this.

If your Upgrade panel is successful, you will receive an official letter from the Graduate School confirming your upgrade from MPhil to PhD.

In the event that you are found to be making unsatisfactory progress following this panel, you will normally be invited to resubmit work for a repeat panel within an agreed timescale, on the understanding that an unsuccessful resubmission may result in continuing registration for an MPhil degree only or withdrawal from the programme. Details of problems with progress have already been dealt with in Section 7 of this handbook, and you should read 7.3 for a detailed description of how these are dealt with. Take note also of 7.5 on extenuating circumstances.
8.6 Submission and viva

The culmination of all your hard work is reached in the viva, based on the thesis that you have submitted. Your supervisor will discuss with you the process leading to submission and identify a suitable timeframe in consultation with you. Most students are over-optimistic about what they will be able to achieve, but experienced supervisors know how much time can be taken up by last minute editing, so it's always a good idea to be guided by your supervisor when it comes to planning when you will be ready to submit your thesis. Bear in mind that your nominated examiners will have agreed to examine your work on the basis of the likely submission date you and your supervisor have identified, and they will have allowed for the considerable time this takes in their work planning. If your submission is significantly delayed this can create problems for them and may even result in a change of examiners.

Note that if you plan to submit more than one month before your fee-paying registration period ends, you will need to complete an Early Submission Form for a Research Degree (accompanied by an explanatory statement if submitting your thesis more than five months before your fee-paying registration ends).

When you are preparing your thesis, pay very close attention to the rules for presentation (title, margins, appendices, etc.) which are included in the Guide to Examinations for Higher Degrees by Research. (See also the useful information on thesis submission, presentation and FAQs provided by the Graduate School.)

One month or more before your proposed submission date, you will be asked to complete your section of a 'Form for the Submission of a Research Thesis and Nomination of Examiners’. This should be completed in consultation with your supervisor and will involve the nomination of suitable examiners and an adviser for your viva. (The adviser plays no part in examining your work but attends the viva to ensure that all relevant procedures are followed correctly.) The nominated examiners and adviser are then subject to formal approval by the Graduate School.

Once the thesis has been submitted, the examiners will decide on a suitable date for the oral examination (viva) and you will be informed of this. Different students prepare in different ways for this examination. Although many students are naturally nervous about the viva, in practice this is usually a rewarding experience. It is designed to offer the examiners the chance to explore with the candidate issues of interest arising from the thesis and is not intended to be confrontational.

A number of options are available to the examiners and they will consider all of these. However, in practice most decisions are for either a Pass with minor corrections or a Resubmission. In practical terms, the main difference between these two is the amount of revision work involved and the time it is expected to take, although in the latter case your thesis has to be formally re-examined before a pass can be awarded (though a further viva is rarely required). The full range of options can be found in the Guide to Examinations for Higher Degrees by Research.

We recommend that you use Warwick Print for printing and binding copies of your thesis, simply because they have extensive experience of the way the systems here work and will be able to offer advice if you need it.
8.7 Part-time students

There are special challenges for part-time students. You may be working in another town or country and find it difficult to contact your supervisor, or you may have a busy job or an active young family and find it hard to get long stretches of time for working. As a result, you may feel remote and isolated without any fellow students for company. You can, at least, be certain that your supervisor and the other staff in the Centre understand your problems and sympathise with you.

However, when you were accepted for the research programme, your ability to overcome such problems will have been considered. We try not to admit any student to a research degree programme on a part-time basis unless we are confident that they have the intellectual and psychological capability to manage the stresses and strains involved. The key to success is to become involved and interested in your research work, setting realistic targets and allowing time for your other responsibilities. It is much better to do a little work frequently than to leave things to the last minute in the hope of setting aside a large period of distraction-free time — this rarely materialises!

Although it is encouraging to note that one of the most common problems arising from part-time study is the result of enthusiasm, the problem itself is none the less serious for that. Many part-time students are close to their research sites, which makes data collection much more convenient than it would be if they were based at Warwick, and in some cases they take it upon themselves to begin data collection without informing their supervisor. This can lead to very serious problems indeed, not only in terms of the evolution of the project but also in the light of the University’s very strict ethical procedures. A breach of these procedures is very serious and may even give rise to disciplinary action, so you are required to discuss data collection plans with your supervisor before you begin to collect data. In fact, it is particularly important for part-time students to keep their supervisor fully informed of their plans and progress because it is all too easy in doctoral studies to waste valuable time exploring blind alleys. Regular contact with your supervisor will certainly save you time and may also save you a good deal of unnecessary worry in the long run.

There are no fixed rules on times of attendance for part-time students, but University Guidelines on the supervision of research students based away from the university recommend that they should spend the equivalent of 12 weeks at the university over the period of their study. However, this time does not need to be evenly distributed, so one of the first things you will need to discuss with your supervisor is arrangements for visits and meetings. You will, of course, be expected to keep in regular contact with your supervisor between such visits.

Part-time students who are non-EEA nationals (i.e. from outside the UK and European Economic Area) will need to apply for a Short-term Student Visa (not a Tier 4 visa) for their periods of attendance at the university. To apply for a Short-term Student Visa, you will need a formal letter signed by the Director of Graduate Studies confirming your part-time PhD student status and the dates and purpose of your study visit to Warwick. Therefore it is important that you communicate your travel plans to either the Research Degrees Administrator or Director of Graduate Studies well in advance so that the letter can be issued and sent to you in hard copy in good time for the visa application process.
9 Some important questions

It would be impossible to list all the possible questions you might ask, but in this section we have assembled some examples of important questions that might occur at each stage in the research process. Don’t be surprised if you end up asking at least one of these along the way!

9.1 The early stages

The early stages involve becoming acquainted, with your supervisor, with your topic, and with the academic community, so most of the questions at this stage focus on orientation and relationships.

I seem to waste a lot of time on unnecessary reading. Am I doing something wrong?

This is a perfectly normal and very healthy stage that all research students go through. You will need to position your research (conceptually, epistemologically, practically, etc.) in the context of the wider field and sub-field in which you will be working. In order to do this, you need to get a sense of the bigger picture and of the options available to you. Along the way you will inevitably explore some areas that will not feature in your thesis, but a knowledge of these will be invaluable in providing you with a deeper understanding of how your work connects to broader issues in the field.

I’m a research student, so why am I expected to attend taught sessions in my first year?

Apart from the fact that some sessions (e.g. entry and ethics) are essential for all researchers and many will be directly relevant to your own work, it is worth bearing in mind that research is less predictable than you might expect. This means that a session which you consider irrelevant to your interests at the time may later on prove to be invaluable. Just as importantly, in attending these sessions you will have the opportunity to interact with other research students at the same stage as you. Working in this way will generate valuable insights into not only intellectual issues relevant to your work but also practical and psychological aspects of the research process. Feedback from past MPhil/PhD students has underlined the importance of these sessions. In fact, we expect all our students to develop an understanding of a wide range of types of research into language, language teaching, intercultural communication and applied linguistics so that they can take on research-related responsibilities in their future careers. In the international academic world, anyone with a research degree is expected to understand a great deal about research in general and should be able to supervise their own students and read other people’s research in an informed and critical way.
Some important questions

What will happen if I don’t get on well with my supervisor?

Every effort will be made to ensure that the supervisory arrangements put in place for your doctoral work continue to work as well as possible throughout your period of study. However, we are aware that difficulties do sometimes arise between doctoral students and their supervisors, often through no fault on either side. If you should have any concerns relating to your supervision, please feel free to raise the matter directly with your supervisor, or if you prefer, to discuss the matter in confidence with the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), or with the Director of the Centre if the DGS is your supervisor. Any difficulties raised by the student relating to supervision will not prejudice that student in any way. However, it is important to note that it is the responsibility of the student to bring the difficulties to the attention of the Director of Graduate Studies or the Director of the Centre or, in the last resort, to the University Graduate School Office, in good time. The University cannot remedy difficulties or failings of which it was not made properly aware.

Can I change my research topic?

To some extent, all research topics change in the process of refinement and focusing that takes place in the early stages of doctoral studies, though in practice the changes may be relatively minor. The shift involved can usually be accommodated within the normal supervision process, but occasionally the changes are significant enough to call for a serious re-evaluation of the project. Even here, where your current supervisor’s area of expertise can accommodate the relevant changes, the adjustment can be made without involving an outside party. However, if the change means that your supervisor feels no longer able to provide the quality of supervision required, the matter should be referred to the Director of Graduate Studies. If another supervisor can be found within the Centre, transfer can be arranged, subject to agreement at a Graduate Progress meeting in response to a formal request from you. However, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible in all cases, as the following extract from the Graduate School’s ‘Guidelines on the Supervision and Monitoring of Research Degree Students’ makes clear:

It is recognised that, should a student request a change of research topic to one in which the department has insufficient expertise to provide supervision, it may not be possible to find an alternative supervisor.

I have problems with writing. Can I get help?

Yes, certainly. For international students from non-English backgrounds, there are classes in academic writing run by Centre staff. These Insessional Language Classes are usually held at lunch time or in the evenings. If you are a student whose first language is English, these will not be the best classes for you, but Student Careers and Skills organise several academic writing workshops which may be helpful (and these workshops are of course open to international students also). In addition, there are a number of books available in the library on writing up research. You will also be receiving feedback from your supervisor on your written work and should not be worried about bringing up any specific problems you may have.
9.2 The middle stages

The middle stages involve data collection and analysis, so most of the questions are practical ones related to acquiring an adequate data set and identifying the nature of the contribution that your research will make.

How long can I spend away from the university collecting data?

There is no rule about this provided that you meet the University’s minimum requirement. If you are receiving funding, it is also vitally important to ensure that your period of absence from the university (or your period of residence in your home country) does not violate the conditions of your sponsorship. Subject to these limitations, the period spent in data collection must be negotiated and agreed with your supervisor. Much depends on the nature of your data collection and the opportunities that are available to you locally. For example, in some cases more than one visit may be essential, while in others a single extended stay will be sufficient. Your supervisor will discuss with you what arrangement is most suitable for your project and will be involved in the planning and preparation for your visit. You will also need to ensure that you keep in contact with your supervisor during your time away from the university. Finally, it is important to emphasise that where working at your institution forms an essential part of your data collection, this will be allowed, but you will not be given permission to return home simply in order to work. Please note also that for any travel overseas (e.g. to collect data), you will need to submit an Overseas Travel Form.

I’ve started my work in the field and discovered that things are very different from what I expected, so there’s no point in going on with my project. Do I have to come back and start again?

This situation is more common than you might expect. However much you plan and however carefully you check and double-check the information you have been given, it is impossible to predict exactly what conditions will be like in the field. For example, the classes you have arranged to observe may no longer be available or the people who were to feature in your project have changed their minds because of local developments since you made arrangements. If this happens, don’t panic: you will be in email or skype contact with your supervisor, who will be able to discuss with you the options for shifting the focus of your project or adjusting the methodology to accommodate the new situation. Where this has happened in the past, students have sometimes ended up with a project much more interesting than the one they set out with, simply because they were forced by circumstances to rethink things in the field. By the same token, if you discover in the field that there is in fact an unexpected opportunity to collect particularly rich and interesting data, make sure that you raise this with your supervisor immediately: successful research involves seizing good opportunities when they arise.

I’ve begun to analyse my data but there’s nothing interesting there. Do I need to collect more data?

The answer is almost certainly no. In normal life we are not used to looking very deeply into things for an extended period, so we are quickly disappointed when nothing interesting emerges after relatively brief exposure to our data. However, a thesis is the product of three years’ intensive work and is designed to make an
original contribution to knowledge, so the process of discovery and understanding takes time and effort. Experienced researchers are used to seeing ‘nothing’ at first but know that returning constantly to their data, working on it and thinking long and hard about it will reveal features and patterns that were invisible at first. Your supervisor will be able to help you understand what is required, and a short conversation with a fellow research student who has gone through this process should reassure you.

I’ve just read a recently published paper that’s based on research that’s identical to mine. What can I do?

You have just experienced the standard nightmare of all research students. However, it is just that — a nightmare that disappears in the cold light of day. No two projects are ever identical in all aspects, and when you get over your initial shock and look closely at this paper you will discover that it differs in some key aspects. In fact, rather than undermining your own research it reinforces it because it shows that the area you are researching is an important one. Study this research carefully and ask yourself what you can learn from it; then contact the person who wrote the paper to establish links with someone who is working in the same area as you — that’s how academic communities are formed and grow.

9.3 The final stages

By now, the hard work is largely done and it’s a matter of writing up your thesis and completing the examination process. The questions tend to focus on procedures and regulations.

My thesis is much longer than the maximum length but it’s all essential material. Does it matter if I ignore the rules, or can I get an exemption?

Many students begin the doctoral process by wondering how they’ll ever manage to produce enough words to make up a thesis — and end it by wondering how they’ll ever say all they need to say in so few words. But the regulations relating to length have been laid down by the University in the light of very extensive experience and there can be no exceptions: if you submit a thesis that is significantly longer than the maximum allowed, it will not be accepted. (The maximum length is 80,000 words for a PhD thesis.) Your supervisor will help you to decide what is essential and what is peripheral to your thesis and the result may be that you find yourself with the material for a valuable academic paper on a topic that is not covered, or at least not covered in depth, in your thesis. Another possibility is that you have included some materials that are best moved to an appendix and which therefore do not have to be included in the total (an additional 5,000 words is allowed for appendices). Here is the relevant regulation from the University’s ‘Regulations Governing Higher Degrees’:

To satisfy the requirements of the degree of PhD, a thesis shall constitute a substantial original contribution to knowledge which is, in principle, worthy of peer-reviewed publication. The thesis shall be clearly and concisely written and well argued and shall show a satisfactory knowledge of both primary and secondary sources. In addition it shall contain a full bibliography and, where appropriate, a description of
methods and techniques used in the research. The thesis shall not exceed 70,000 words in the Faculty of Science and 80,000 words in the Faculties of Arts, Medicine and Social Sciences. These limits shall be exclusive of appendices, footnotes, tables and bibliography.

In the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences an appendix may contain material that functions as data to supplement the main argument of the thesis, and may not contain material that is an essential or integral part of the thesis. The total length of all appendices combined may not exceed 5,000 words in length unless permission to exceed this length is given by the Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies.

**What happens if my supervisor thinks my draft thesis needs more work but I think it’s ready to submit?**

The responsibility for the thesis is entirely yours, which means that you can submit it when you consider that it is complete. However, supervisors are experienced in judging these matters and have usually acted as external examiners in other universities, so their advice is extremely valuable. If you decide to submit your thesis against your supervisor’s advice, it is likely that you will receive a formal statement in the form of an email or letter in which the supervisor’s position is made clear. This will give you the chance to reflect on your decision.

**Who picks the external examiner?**

At least a month before you submit your thesis you will be asked to complete the first part of a [thesis submission and examiner nomination form](#) to which your supervisor will add the names of the proposed internal and external examiners. It is then a matter for the Graduate School to decide whether to approve the nominated examiners. The process of choosing who to nominate usually involves discussions between the supervisor and supervisee, though it may extend to other academic colleagues where the supervisor feels that this would be beneficial. You may have met someone at a conference who showed a particular interest in your work and has the necessary academic qualifications and experience to act as an external examiner, in which case you should certainly suggest this to your supervisor. More commonly, it is the supervisor who suggests someone (or in some cases more than one person) who might be suitable. In any case, the final nominee should be someone that both you and your supervisor are happy with.

**If I’m asked to resubmit, will my supervisor carry on supervising me as normal?**

In this case the relationship between you and your supervisor necessarily changes. You will receive a similar level of support to the one you received in the writing up stage of your thesis, where your supervisor’s role was to respond to the written draft of your thesis. If the examiners recommend a resubmission, they will submit a list of required changes to your thesis, a copy of which will be sent to you. It is then your responsibility to ensure that you make the necessary changes. Since your supervisor will not have suggested these and is not expected to contribute directly to the work involved, their role is essentially advisory. The normal arrangement in such cases is that the supervisor and the student have a meeting as soon as possible following receipt of the list of required changes in order to establish that they have a shared understanding of what is expected. In some cases they may also agree a schedule for completion of the changes, although this is not common.
Once this meeting is concluded, the student goes away (sometimes back to their home country) in order to complete the changes. If clarification or advice is required while this is being done, it is legitimate to email your supervisor for help, but on the understanding that such requests are not part of a regular and ongoing series of exchanges of the sort that you may have been used to for most of your time as a research student. In terms of the rewriting itself, minor changes will not need to be checked, but more major redrafting can be sent to the supervisor for a final check before submission.

9.4 Other

What happens if my supervisor disappears?

If, for any reason, your supervisor should become absent or unavailable to direct your work for a period of 4 weeks or longer, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) will meet with you at the earliest available opportunity to discuss the support you need. You may be assigned a replacement supervisor, on either a temporary or permanent basis. Alternatively, if return of your supervisor is expected within a short period and you find that you have adequate support (e.g. from your second supervisor, or other members of staff with whom you are in contact), the DGS will agree a support plan with you. Be sure to advise your DGS fully of your requirements, since it may be difficult to recoup time lost if your research falls behind schedule.

What happens if I want to make a complaint?

This depends on the nature of the complaint. Wherever possible, it is best to try to resolve any interpersonal issues or minor problems with the individual or individuals involved. However, if this is not possible, perhaps because of the nature of the complaint or the nature of the relationship, you may wish to discuss it in the first instance with the Director of Graduate Studies, who will be able to advise you on an appropriate response. If you are not satisfied with this or would prefer not to discuss it with the Director of Graduate Studies, you can complain directly to the Director of the Centre, who will take whatever action is necessary. Should you wish to pursue your complaint outside the Centre, you should consult the relevant guidance provided by the Academic Registrar’s Office. Obviously, we hope that you will never feel the need to complain about the supervision and support we provide, and we will do all we can to make your stay here a very happy one. However, we recognise that part of this support involves helping you as much as we can should you feel it necessary to make a complaint.
Appendix 1: Contact details

Note
The telephone numbers below are for internal calls. Please add the following numbers before the internal number when calling from outside the university:

- When phoning from overseas, add 4424765
- When phoning within the UK but outside Coventry, add 024765
- When phoning from inside the Coventry area, add 765

The Centre
The Centre for Applied Linguistics
University of Warwick
Coventry CV4 7AL

Telephone: 23200 Fax: 24318 Email: appling@warwick.ac.uk

Office staff

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Telephone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>75729</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research degrees administrator</td>
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<td>Award-bearing courses</td>
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<td>50173</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

PhD supervisors

<table>
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<tbody>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Director of the Centre for Applied Linguistics: Prof Helen Spencer-Oatey
Director of Graduate Studies: Dr Ema Ushioda

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Appendix 2: Useful websites

Important forms (Immigration letter, temporary withdrawal, etc.)
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/studentrecords/srforms/

Accommodation Office
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/accommodation/studentaccommodation/

Careers
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/careers/

Centre for Applied Linguistics
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al

Counselling Service
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/tutors/counselling/

ePortfolio
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/skills/rssp/eportfolio

Equal opportunities
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/equalops

Graduate School
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/gsp/

Guide to examinations for higher degrees by research
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/gsp/formslibrary/guide_to_examinations_for_higher_degrees_by_research.pdf

Guidelines on the supervision and monitoring of research degree students
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/gsp/formslibrary/guidelines_on_supervision_and_monitoring.pdf

Health Centre
http://www.uwhc.org.uk/

Insessional language support
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/al/learning_english/insessional/

Learning Grid
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/grid/

Music Centre
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/musiccentre/

IT Services
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/its/

IT Training
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/its/training

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Library
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/

Modern Records Centre
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc/

Plagiarism
http://www.warwick.ac.uk/services/elearning/plato/plagiarism/menuplag.html

Plagiarism.org
http://www.plagiarism.org/

Regulations governing higher degrees
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/gov/calendar/section2/regulations/higherdegrees/

Sport at Warwick
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/sportscentre/

Students’ Union

Students’ Union Advice
http://www.warwicksu.com/advice/

Students’ Union Sports
http://www.warwicksu.com/sports/

Student Staff Liaison Committee
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/sunion/sslc/socialstudies/celte/

Unitemps
https://www.unitemps.co.uk/public/default.asp

Warwick blogs
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/its/servicessupport/web/blogs/

Warwick Portfolio
http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/academicoffice/gsp/current/warwickportfolio

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Appendix 3: Research modules

Research Module 1: Understanding Research in Applied Linguistics

This module aims at extending and deepening awareness of the role of research in investigating a range of contemporary issues in applied linguistics and English language education. It will introduce key concepts and issues in research and give an overview of approaches available for investigation. It will consider how approaches can be selected and integrated in the exploration of a particular professional problem. Content will include:

- The role of research in applied linguistics: characteristics of research; essentials of the research process
- Paradigms of inquiry: post-positivism, constructivism, critical theory
- Researching particular topics and contexts: e.g. cultural issues, classrooms, professional contexts
- Research approaches: e.g. action research, case study, experimental design

Research Module 2: Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

This module aims to introduce you to a variety of research methods and to give you practical experience in designing a range of instruments so that you develop the capacity to carry out research of many kinds. It will also help you to develop critical capacity in assessing the effectiveness of data collection and analysis in reports of research. Content may include:

- Entry and ethics
- Observation
- Interviewing
- Designing questionnaires
- Approaches to analysis

Additional sessions

Additional sessions may be offered at appropriate points in your research journey, and in response to students’ needs or requests. These will be practical in nature and may include sessions such as the following:

- Writing up your thesis
- Disseminating findings at conferences and in journals

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Appendix 4: Recommended reading for research modules

Understanding Research in Applied Linguistics
Richards, K. 2003 *Qualitative Inquiry in TESOL*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

Useful reading on the research process in general
## Appendix 5: Useful telephone numbers

**Campus Security**  
24 hour emergency – police, fire, ambulance 22222 (internal phone)  
If ringing from a mobile: 024 765 22222

**Off-campus Security**  
24 hour emergency – police, fire, ambulance 999

Your local police station (non-emergency) 101

**The Centre for Applied Linguistics**  
Centre for Applied Linguistics 024 7652 3200 (23200)  
Research Degrees Administrator 024 7657 4335 (74335)  
Director of Graduate Studies 024 7657 4236 (74236)

**The University**  
Accommodation 024 7652 3772 (23772)  
Chaplaincy 024 7652 3519 (23519)  
Counselling Service 024 7652 3761 (23761)  
Health Centre 024 7652 4888 (24888)  
IT Services 024 7657 3737 (73737)  
Nightline 024 7642 2199 (22199)  
Nursery 024 7652 3389 (23389)  
Senior Tutor/Student Support Services 024 7657 5570 (75570)

**Other**  
_________________________ __________________________
_________________________ __________________________
_________________________ __________________________
_________________________ __________________________

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