GUIDE TO END OF SESSION PROCESSING 2023-24
POSTGRADUATE RESEARCHERS

CONTENTS

1.   <u>Regulations and Codes of Practice</u>

You can view the full set of regulations on the [Regulations](#) web page.

You should ensure that you are familiar with the following Regulations:

5.2.4 Registered Students Following Research Degree Programmes
6.1.4 Research Degree Programmes with Taught Elements
6.2.3 Research Degree programmes
6.3.3 Registered Students Following Research Degree Programmes – Supervision arrangements.
7.4.8 Transfer Between Research Degree Programmes
7.4.9 Withdrawal
7.8 Reasonable Diligence

The Code of Practice on the Supervision and Monitoring Progress of Postgraduate Researchers and the Code of Practice on Student Attendance/Engagement and Reasonable Diligence are available on the [Code of Practice](#) webpage. Section 3 of the Code of Practice on the Supervision and Monitoring Progress of PGRs sets out the requirements for the monitoring and review of progress of all PGRs.

The GRS3 Progress Review form recommended for use for the purpose of monitoring progress can be found on the [Annual Progress Review](#) web page.

2.   BIRMS

For PGR end of session processing, the academic year is taken as **1 October to 30 September of the following year.**

In BIRMS, validation is set to the end of the PGR year, i.e. 30 September. For the 2023-24 academic year this is 30 September 2024 and each ART has validation against this date to prevent inappropriate decisions being processed. For example, to apply ART H - Proceed to thesis with effect from the beginning of 2024-25, the end of the minimum period of registration must be on or before 30 September 2024. Where the end of the minimum period of registration is after 30 September 2024, and ART H is selected, an error will occur and the decision will not be processed.

End of Minimum period of registration ending in early October 2024

Where the end of minimum period of registration expires in early October 2024 (up to 14 October 2024) and you wish to transfer the PGR to thesis awaited status as they have completed the primary research area, you will be prevented from applying ART H or T (proceed to thesis with outstanding requirements) as the minimum period of registration has not expired by 30 September 2024.

PLEASE DO NOT USE ART A or ART D IN THIS SITUATION. PLEASE CONTACT RESEARCH STUDENT ADMINISTRATION FOR THE BELOW WORKAROUND TO BE EMPLOYED.

The end of minimum period of registration date needs to be temporarily changed to 30 September 2024 to allow the appropriate ART to be processed. Please contact Research Student Administration who will facilitate the change, and once the ART H/T has been processed, please advise RSA and they will immediately revert the minimum registration back to the original date.

When entering amended end of minimum and maximum period of registration dates in BIRMS you need to use the following date format: DD/MM/YY. Please note that an error may be encountered if you use the format of 09 SEP 2024.

You do not need to process an ART for PGRs with a status of L – leaver. They are listed in ES03 in BIRMS for information only and you can remove them from the display in ES03 by using the "Status to exclude" facility on ES01.

During the save and release process you may find that errors have been generated. Where errors occur, module marks and recommendations and the ART are not processed and are held back in BIRMS.

See: Appendix B - BOXI reports to support PGR end of session processing
See: Appendix C - Guide to common BIRMS errors

3.   Marks and module recommendations for taught elements in postgraduate research degrees

All marks and module recommendations for PGR programmes with taught modules should be ratified by the appropriate Board of Examiners.

To see module marks and recommendations click on the "M" button in BIRMS ES03.

Where taught elements have not been undertaken, the progress decision (ART) should be actioned in BIRMS as normal once the annual progress review has taken place and the progress decision approved by the School Progress Panel. Otherwise marks and module recommendations should be released with ART W and the final agreed progress decision released once this has been agreed by the School Progress Panel.

PGRs on programmes with taught elements that have been able to complete all teaching and assessment as normal should be considered under the standard University of Birmingham cohort specific Regulations and module marks and recommendations and ARTs can be released in BIRMS as normal.

PGR programmes with taught elements which include the award of an interim taught masters award

Please refer to the [Examination Board guidance and resources 2023/24 (birmingham.ac.uk)](#) which contains useful resources for PGT exam boards. [Section 2](#) contains guidance and resources for examination boards. Please also refer to [Appendix B](#) for information relating to UG and PGT Exam Boards. Please note this covers PGT finalists and therefore is relevant to any PhD with Integrated Study programmes with approval for an interim taught MSc/MA to be awarded.

4.   Progress Decisions and ARTs

A progress decision (ART) is required for all PGRs, *irrespective of when they commenced their programme of study*, to confirm their registration status for the next academic year.

Please note: PGRs who started in July 2024 and therefore admitted to the 2023-24 academic year, will need to be moved to the 2024-25 academic session, so please action a progress decision as soon as possible so that they can register for the 2024-25 academic year.

See: Appendix A – Progress decisions and ART descriptors
See: Appendix B – BOXI reports to support PGR end of session processing
See: Appendix D – Quick reference guide to PGR ARTs

5.   Timescales

Module marks and recommendations should be released with ART W as soon as they have been ratified by the relevant Exam Board. This is particularly important where the modules are shared with taught programmes and where any supplementary assessments are to be undertaken in the current academic year.

The final progress decision (ART) should be released at least a week in advance of the start of the 2024-25 academic year to permit the PGR sufficient time to complete online registration prior to the start of the 2024-25 academic year on 23 September 2024. A delay in an ART being released in BIRMS will result in the PGR not being registered by the beginning of 2024-25 academic year and may result in the PGR losing access to University facilities and being omitted from University's statutory student data returns.

The PGR must have a record in the 2024-25 academic session and have completed online registration in order to access the October 2024 online GRS2 form.

6.   Student Route (previously called Tier 4) Visa Compliance - Academic Progression

Where PGRs holding a Student route visa are given the progress decision of proceed and transfer programme (ART E) or are required to downgrade registration from doctoral to masters, this may not demonstrate academic progression under the Home Office academic progression rules.

BEFORE PROCESSING ART E for a Student route PGR, please advise the PGR to contact the International Student Team (IST) for advice on the impact of a transfer of programme on their Student visa. Further information and guidance is available on the [IST academic progression](#) web page. Please **do not** process an ART E for a PGR holding a Student visa until the RSA PBS Team have confirmed that it is ok to do so.

Please note, for all ATAS-attracting areas of research, a programme transfer will require a new ATAS certificate to be obtained before the transfer can be actioned. Validation in BIRMS will prevent ART E from being processed unless a new ATAS certificate has been obtained and receipt recorded by RSA.

7. Visiting Postgraduate Researchers (VPGRs)

Where the VPGR's period of registration extends into 2024-25 i.e. beyond 30 September 2024, ART A - proceed should be actioned in BIRMS and the VPGR will be required to register online for the 2024-25 academic year.

If the period of registration **ends before 30 September 2024** and the VPGR has completed their registration, please advise the RSA PBS Team via rsapbsteam@contacts.bham.ac.uk confirming the leaving date and RSA will update the student record to leaver status.

Please note that the student's visa may not permit them to extend their period of registration.

8. Data Protection, PGR debtors and feedback to PGRs

Operations Managers or nominees are regularly provided with lists of students excluded from the University due to outstanding tuition fee debt. Until the debt is cleared, marks for these students should not be confirmed at a Board of Examiners meeting. If you are unsure which PGRs still have a financial or other hold, a BOXI report is available which will provide this information (Banner Documents/Students/Students Records (General)/Students with an active hold) See Appendix B of the appendices.

If PGRs have a financial hold, validation within BIRMS will prevent an ART from being released.

If an excluded student takes an assessment and requests feedback, this must be provided by the School, as this is personal information held under the Data Protection Act and therefore potentially liable to inclusion under a Subject Access Request. The student should be informed that any marks are not approved or ratified by the University until the tuition fee debt is cleared. Only Registry may produce transcripts for these students, which will have the words "Marks not approved" stamped across it. Once the debt is cleared, Registry will ask the School to take Chair's Action and confirm the student's marks and progress or award decision. The marks and decision may then be released into the student portal.

9. Online results and registration e-mails

As soon as an ART (progress decision) is released from BIRMS into Banner, PGRs:

- are able to view the marks for any taught elements and confirmation of their overall progress decision online in the student portal at Exams and assessment (birmingham.ac.uk).
- will be sent an e-mail advising them to register online at Online Registration - University of Birmingham for 2024-25.

It is important that online registration is completed by the beginning of the 2024-25 academic year on 23 September 2024.

10. Useful Web addresses and contacts

BIRMS End of Session

Academic Appeals Procedure

Plagiarism

Extenuating Circumstances procedures and guidance

Leave of absence

Extensions to thesis submission deadlines

Thesis submission and examination

If you have any questions or require any further information, please contact one of the following:

- For queries relating to progress decisions for postgraduate researchers:

  Research Student Administration Team – pgreos@contacts.bham.ac.uk

- Appeals: Academic Policy and Standards - appeals@contacts.bham.ac.uk

- Discipline, examination irregularities and Fitness to Practise issues: Student Conduct Officer – conduct@contacts.bham.ac.uk

- Plagiarism: Student Conduct Officer - conduct@contacts.bham.ac.uk

- Data Protection: - legalservices@contacts.bham.ac.uk