

# Leeds Trinity University PGR Attendance monitoring policy & Protocol for Initiating the Presumed Withdrawn Procedure (from 2020/21)

This document aims to provide a transparent process for attendance monitoring and the Protocol for initiating the “Presumed Withdrawn” procedure in line with the University of Leeds (UoL) requirements.

This protocol should be used in conjunction with the [Postgraduate Research Progress Support process](#) (PSP)

## 1 Introduction

Attendance monitoring is recognised as an important element in supporting both Postgraduate Researcher (PGR) retention and performance. Regular and appropriate attendance has been a University requirement for many years as stipulated in the [Research Degrees handbook](#) section 6.4. This procedure describes the process for initiating the presumed withdrawn procedure when attendance requirements have not been met by the PGR. This document refers to those PGRs who have successfully registered.

## 2 Attendance Requirements and Monitoring

PGR students are expected to engage in regular supervision with their supervisory team. This will normally take the format of commenting on work and a mix of online and Face-to-Face meetings, with a minimum of ten per academic year for a full time student (i.e. roughly one per month). Attendance at these meetings is recorded in student records and will form the basis of our attendance monitoring process.

**Note:** as a minimum we would expect that face-to-face contact occurs on at least a bimonthly basis, save for in exceptional circumstances – the reason for which should be documented in the supervision meeting notes. For Part time PGRs this would be at least 50% of the meetings.

## 3 Actions taken when Students Fail to Attend

Where students do not attend supervision for 8 weeks or (where relevant) miss monthly on-campus sign in they will be contacted to offer support and request an explanation for absence. Correspondence will be sent by Research Office by email and letter with an email copy to their supervisor. An acceptable response may be that the student was ill or had another conflicting appointment. They will have a further opportunity to rearrange supervision or sign-in within 2 weeks of the missed appointment. If the student does not attend or no response is received within one week, a second email copied to supervisor(s) will be sent. If no response is received

within 1 week the supervisor(s) will commence more formal action via the Presumed Withdrawn protocol (see section 5 below).

A satisfactory response means that normal supervision and attendance monitoring will recommence.

## 4 Withdrawals

PGRs wishing to withdraw permanently from the University should complete a [withdrawal form](#) which should also be signed by the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies (DoPGRS) and returned immediately to the Leeds Trinity University (LTU) Research and Knowledge Exchange Office (RKEO) [research@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:research@leedstrinity.ac.uk) for submission to the UoL Doctoral College Operations.

If you know that a PGR has left, then whilst best practice is to get the PGR to complete a [withdrawal form](#), if there is any delay with a PGR holding a sponsored student visa, then please notify student administration [records@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:records@leedstrinity.ac.uk) and the Visa compliance officer ([visacompliance@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:visacompliance@leedstrinity.ac.uk)) immediately (and forward any emails whereby the PGR has confirmed that they have left) in order that LTU can make a timely report to the Home Office.

## 5 Presumed withdrawn Protocol

A PGR may be presumed withdrawn if they do not attend supervision meetings or respond to University correspondence as above. Failure to attend supervision for more than 8 weeks without authorized absence or to attend monthly on campus sign-in for international students will result in the following process. The presumed withdrawn procedure is described below:

Step 1: DoPGRS or supervisor(s) contact the PGR in writing (letter/email) advising them to contact the University. See appendix 1.1 for example template.

Step 2: Where no response is received within 1-week of the initial contact the DoPGRS makes a further attempt to contact the PGR in writing. See Appendix 1.2 for example presumed withdrawn email/letter.

Step 3: RKEO instigates Presumed Withdrawn process where no response is received. RKEO informs the UoL Doctoral College Operations (DCO) via email [dcprogs@leeds.ac.uk](mailto:dcprogs@leeds.ac.uk) that the Presumed Withdrawn process has been actioned and attaches the two written communications from the School to the PGR.

Step 4: The RKEO writes to the PGR informing them that they are now presumed to have permanently left the University.

Step 5: RKEO updates the central research records and informs LTU Visa Compliance Officer and student administration in order that central LTU records be updated to a permanent leaver 10 working days after the letter described in step 2 is sent. Colleagues in Information technology (IT) to be informed and closure of IT

accounts to commence after serving of required notice period.

Step 6: Where a PGR responds to question details about their absence, the DoPGRS will liaise with the PGR and Supervisor(s)

## 6 Reporting withdrawals

In the case of withdrawn international PGRs who are present in the UK as sponsored students (formerly Tier 4) of the Home Office Points-based Immigration system, the Visa Compliance Officer will notify the Home Office, and the PGR will be required to leave the UK unless they intend to submit a further, valid immigration application for further leave to remain. The PGR will be informed of the report to the Home Office and advised to contact the Visa Compliance Officer for advice.

### 6.1.1 Appendix 1.1 Example email/letter to a PGR who is identified as potentially absent without permission

*Example email/letter: from the supervisor to a PGR who is absent without permission. The letter should be tailored to suit the individual circumstances.*

Dear XXXX

I am writing to ask you to make contact with your supervisory team and research office by return email to arrange a supervisory meeting. We are concerned that we have not heard from you and may be in a position where you are not able to engage in your studies. If there are circumstances or events which are preventing you from progressing your research (eg ill-health, personal difficulties etc) you should let us know so we can work with you to take the steps necessary to safeguard your academic position whilst you address any difficulties you are facing. This may involve requesting a period of suspension to your studies. Please could you make contact with us as a matter of urgency? If we do not hear from you in the next 7-days we will have to refer the matter to the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies (DoPGRS) and this may result in the initiation of the “presumed withdrawn” procedure which ultimately could terminate your studies at Leeds Trinity University.

I hope to hear from you very soon.

Best Wishes

## 6.1.2 Appendix 1.2 Example email/letter to a PGR who is absent without permission

*Example email/letter: from a school to a PGR who is absent without permission. The letter should be tailored to suit the individual circumstances.*



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**PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL**

**Prof Martin Barwood**

**Director of Postgraduate Research Studies**

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E-mail: [m.barwood@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:m.barwood@leedstrinity.ac.uk)

Date:

**Re: Presumed Withdrawn Procedure  
ID Number:**

Dear XXXX

I understand from your supervisor(s) and/or research office that you have not responded to requests to engage in supervision meetings with an initial request sent by email on XXXX. Your supervisory team also inform me that you have not submitted work to the timetable agreed.

Please could you make contact with the University through mechanisms outlined below as a matter of urgency? If there are circumstances or events which are preventing you from progressing your studies (eg ill-health, personal difficulties etc) you should let us know so we can work with you to take the steps necessary to safeguard your academic position whilst you address any difficulties you are facing. This may involve requesting a period of suspension to your studies.

If a suspension to your studies is necessary it is important that you make such a request without delay as the University will not normally grant retrospective periods of suspension of more than one month and you will lose the time available to complete your studies.

I would like to make you aware that postgraduate researchers (PGRs) may seek advice and support on the Presumed Withdrawn Procedure by contacting the Student Advice Centre, Leeds University Union, where experienced staff are available to provide guidance. Further information is available at <http://www.leedsuniversityunion.org.uk/helpandadvice/> If you wish to seek support from the Student Advice Centre, LUU you should do so immediately.

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Alternatively, LTU PGRs may wish to seek further information from the LTU Students' Union where experienced staff are available to provide guidance. Further information is available at <https://www.leedstrinity.ac.uk/student-life/students-union/> If you wish to seek support from the Student Advice Centre, LTU you should do so immediately.

If you do not respond to this email and make contact with the University by 4.30 pm on XXXX (within 10 working days of the date of this letter) the University will have no alternative but to presume that you have withdrawn from your studies and your candidature will be terminated immediately.

The University wishes to avoid this course of action and urges you to make contact with any of the following individuals within the University:

Director of PGR Studies; Prof Martin Barwood ([M.Barwood@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:M.Barwood@leedstrinity.ac.uk)), the Research and Knowledge Exchange Office ([research@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:research@leedstrinity.ac.uk)) or your supervisory team; XXXX

I hope to hear from you in the near future

Yours sincerely

Prof Martin Barwood (BSc, PhD, FHEA Director of Postgraduate Research Studies

cc: Supervisor(s), University PGR Administrator on [research@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:research@leedstrinity.ac.uk)