1. **Purpose of minimum benchmarking**

The University's postgraduate research (PGR) provision is based on the expectations of the QAA Quality Code for Higher Education for postgraduate research students (section B11 of the Code): that is, that the University offers a “research environment that provides secure academic standards for doing research and learning about research approaches, methods, procedures and protocols. This environment offers students quality of opportunities and the support they need to achieve successful academic, personal and professional outcomes from their research degrees.”

PGR students can be enrolled in full-time (FT) or part-time (PT) modes and may be based at a campus of the University or a remote site (i.e. distance mode).

The University is committed to providing equality of opportunity to all PGR students, irrespective of the group or groups to which they belong (based on, for example, a declared disability, specific cultural background, location or age).

PGR students have different needs and requirements depending on the subject of study, discipline, methodology and nature of their research programme. Despite these differences, the University has identified certain minimum requirements which it is committed to providing all PGR students (through a combination of the Doctoral College, Schools, Faculties, external partners and/or 'Node').

2. **All PGR students will be provided with the following:**

- A suitably qualified supervision team that encourages the development and successful pursuit of their programme of research
- Access to the University’s IT and online systems including email, software and digital learning environment
- Access to the University’s Library resources through Primo, the gateway to print and electronic collections such as books, e-books, journals, digital maps, British Standards, e-newspapers and more. The majority of electronic resources are available off-campus. An overview of subject resources is available via online LibGuides.
- Access to Gradbook
- Access to a suitable programme of research-related skills and development opportunities that contribute to their ability to successfully complete their programme of study
- Access to and support for a range of development opportunities that contribute to their ability to develop personal and, where pertinent, employment-related skills
- Guidance on the ethical pursuit of research and the avoidance of research misconduct
- Mechanisms for addressing their feedback both as individuals and collectively
- The opportunity to raise complaints or to appeal
3. All PGR students resident at a campus of the University of Plymouth will additionally be provided with the following:

- A work-space with the following minimum attributes:
  - A desk and/or workbench, which may be shared or “hot-desked”
  - A lockable space for personal items
  - Access to a computer, which may be shared or “hot-desked”
  - Access to printing facilities, which may require payment
- Access to appropriate facilities to conduct their research, agreed at admission and/or project approval stages
- Access to photocopying to an agreed maximum
- Library access 24/7 (including to its electronic holdings) and an entitlement to a defined quantity of Inter-library loans
- Access to all student-focused resources listed in the University’s Student Handbook (except for those identified explicitly for undergraduates and postgraduates on ‘taught’ programmes only)
- Access to at least one subject-relevant taught postgraduate module run by the University

Please note that this represents the University’s minimum commitment for any student based at a University of Plymouth campus (whether full time, part time or in ‘writing up’ mode) and will be exceeded in many departments, especially for full time students. Information on disciplinary-specific resource expectations should be discussed at interview stage and made available in local research degree handbooks.

4. Distance students

Distance PGR students include those who are not resident at a campus of the University, who are undertaking a low residency programme of study, as well as those based at co-operating institutions remote from a University campus or one of its partner Institutions.

When PGR students are based either FT or PT at a co-operating institution, then it is expected that the Institution will provide facilities in line with those outlined above.

Distance students can expect good access to their supervisory team by email, Skype, and/or telephone and a number of face-to-face meetings at pre-determined intervals. Access to appropriate research facilities by distance students must be determined prior to enrolment on the programme of study.

Additional library support services are available for part-time students, students living more than 25 miles from the University and for students with disabilities.

The SCONUL Access Scheme provides borrowing privileges at most other higher education libraries in the UK and Ireland for University of Plymouth postgraduate research students. This scheme does not normally include access to IT or electronic library services.

APPROVED BY GRADUATE (SUB-)COMMITTEE
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