# Application for Research Degree Awarding Powers: University of Cumbria

## Scrutiny team report

November 2018

## Contents

# About this report

This report reflects the findings of a team appointed by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) to conduct a detailed scrutiny of an application from the University of Cumbria for the power to award research degrees.

The application was considered under criteria approved by Government in 2015. In advising on applications, QAA is guided by the relevant criteria and the associated evidence requirements. QAA's work in this area is overseen by its Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers (ACDAP), a subcommittee of the QAA Board.

ACDAP's initial consideration of applications establishes whether an applicant has made a case to proceed to detailed scrutiny of the application and the evidence on which it is based. If satisfied on this matter, ACDAP agrees that a team may be appointed to conduct the scrutiny and prepare a report, enabling ACDAP to determine the nature of the recommendation it will make to the QAA Board.

Scrutiny teams produce reports following each of the engagements undertaken. The final report reflects the team's findings and is structured around the three main criteria contained in the 2015 RDAP criteria,[1] namely:

- Criterion 1: The organisation's supervision of its research students, and any teaching it undertakes at doctoral level, is informed by a high level of professional knowledge of current research and advanced scholarly activity in its subjects of study.
- Criterion 2: The organisation satisfies relevant national guidance relating to the award of research degrees.
- Criterion 3: The applicant organisation has achieved more than 30 doctoral degree conferments, awarded through partner universities in the UK.

Applicants for research degree awarding powers (RDAP) must already have, and continue to satisfy the criteria for, taught degree awarding powers (TDAP).

Subject to the approval of the Board, QAA's advice is communicated to the appropriate minister. This advice is provided in confidence. The minister determines whether it should be disclosed to the applicant. A final decision on an application, and the notification of that decision, is a matter for the Privy Council.

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[1] The RDAP criteria are available in Annex A of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills' *Taught Degree Awarding Powers and Research Degree Awarding Powers: Guidance for Higher Education Providers: Criteria and Process for applying for Taught Degree Awarding Powers and Research Degree Awarding Powers* (September 2015) at www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/526813/BIS-15-525-degree-awarding-powers.pdf (PDF, 535KB).

# Executive summary

## The exercise of taught degree awarding powers

The University continues to exercise its taught degree awarding powers competently. It is governed, managed and administered effectively with clear lines of accountability for academic responsibilities alongside effective consideration of action plans, metrics and externality. The University is self-aware, self-critical and takes appropriate action at the strategic level. Deliberative and executive structures have been revised to address regulatory requirements and to meet strategic priorities.

University committees are appropriately constituted, well focused, and fully aware of regulatory contexts in their management of academic standards and quality assurance. This has enabled review and redevelopment of the portfolio and effective revision to the Academic Regulations. Recent statutory reports and sound stewardship of related action plans up to University Board level confirm that the University is efficiently exercising its responsibilities for the setting and maintaining of academic standards and the management of academic quality.

The University has well established mechanisms for the development and recognition of excellent teaching, and the support of learning. Academic staff development is embedded in relevant strategies, action plans and the system for review of professional development. The institutional culture facilitates, recognises and rewards high quality teaching.

Resource allocation is closely tied to strategic objectives with strong governance and prudent planning to manage the distributed campuses. The University has reacted promptly to improve performance against national metrics and with a view to improving the student experience. It is evident that the University maintains and seeks to improve the student environment for the delivery of taught programmes.

On the basis of these findings ACDAP concludes that the University of Cumbria continues to satisfy the criteria governing the grant of taught degree awarding powers and is exercising appropriate stewardship of such powers.

## Academic staff

The University has longstanding and successful experience of offering postgraduate research degrees through its awarding body, Lancaster University. It has also developed and effectively operated its own comprehensive set of codes of practice, policies, procedures and guides in relation to the management and quality assurance of its research degrees. In readiness, should RDAP be awarded, the University has also developed an appropriate draft set of academic regulations relating to the assessment and examination of its own postgraduate research awards and for academic appeals. Policies and procedures are consistently applied and are understood by staff and, where appropriate, students. Effective support in relation to research is provided to both staff and students through the Research Office and Graduate School.

The University has set out its aim to further develop its research activity and reputation including through development of the research capability and capacity of its staff and students. Comprehensive staff development opportunities are in place including support for significant numbers of staff to achieve doctoral qualifications and to increase the number of internal PhD supervisors. All academic staff are expected to be actively involved in their subject area through research, teaching, enterprise, professional practice or domain leadership and such activity is also expected to result in measurable outputs or achievements. While the University is working towards increasing the number of

research active staff through workforce planning and staff development, as demonstrated by the January 2018 data, this strategy will need time to make an impact.

All departments are expected to contribute to the University's research agenda, and the alignment of research centres with the academic departments further embeds research into the core business of the University, including its feed through into teaching practice and supporting the further development of the University's research culture. However, research activity is not yet evenly spread across the departments and discipline areas. The number of postgraduate research students remains small and as staff complete their doctoral studies the University faces the challenge of increasing the number of external students. The University continues to attract only modest amounts of external research-related income and has itself raised the need to further develop and embed a sustainable research culture. It is addressing this in a number of ways including through the alignment of research centres with academic departments, promotion of research through a range of events for both staff and students and the appointment of Visiting Professors and Research Fellows and Professors of Practice.

On the basis of these findings ACDAP concludes that the University of Cumbria meets Criterion 1.

## National guidance

The University has a close and mature working relationship with its awarding body with which it awards MPhil and PhD degrees. It has a strong and well-documented history of maintaining the academic standards of its research degree provision as set by its awarding body through the work of the Academic Board and Research and Enterprise Committee. These committees operate effectively and in line with their terms of reference.

The University's draft postgraduate regulations and policies are aligned with all relevant external expectations. Additionally, the University has undertaken a number of mapping exercises to ensure that its current processes and policies adhere to the relevant regulatory frameworks. These include mapping existing documentation such as its researcher development programme and doctoral supervisor training against the level 8 criteria in the *Framework for Higher Education Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland* (FHEQ), and the University Postgraduate Research Code of Practice which is aligned to Chapter B11 of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code).

The University participates in the Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES), the outcomes from which indicate research students are broadly satisfied with their programmes. The results from the PRES and other internal surveys highlight a number of areas for development, which the University has made steps towards improving, including the provisioning of physical study space for research students at the University's Lancaster campus. The University's Graduate School is the central body tasked with coordinating and organising research degrees with research students and the supervisory teams. Although there are now supervisors embedded within each academic department, there is a disparity in number.

The University does not currently have students attracting research council funding and the majority of its studentships are awarded through internal funding streams. Additionally, the University's research income has not increased in line with its own expectations. Nevertheless, the University has a history of working closely with funding and professional bodies in the delivery of research degrees and does therefore have the capacity to satisfy the expectations of research degree management frameworks issued by the relevant research bodies.

On the basis of these findings ACDAP concludes that the University of Cumbria meets Criterion 2.

**Minimum number of doctoral degree conferments**

From 1987 to the present, the University, as St Martin's College to July 2007 and as University of Cumbria from August 2007, has recommended 101 doctoral students to the awarding body for the conferment of their degree.

On the basis of these findings ACDAP concludes that the University of Cumbria meets Criterion 3.

# Privy Council's decision

The Privy Council's decision is to grant the University of Cumbria research degree awarding powers from 14 March 2019.

# Introduction

This report provides a summary of the work and findings of the scrutiny team (the team) appointed by QAA to review in detail the evidence submitted in support of an application for research degree awarding powers (RDAP) by the University of Cumbria (the University).

The application was considered by QAA's Advisory Committee on Degree Awarding Powers (ACDAP) in May 2017, when the Committee agreed to proceed to the detailed scrutiny of the application. The team appointed to conduct the detailed scrutiny comprised Professor Diane Meehan, Professor Clare Pickles, Mr Harry Williams (scrutiny team members) and Ms Jessica Dodd (secretary). The detailed scrutiny was managed on behalf of QAA by Dr Neil Casey, Quality Manager.

The detailed scrutiny began in September 2017, culminating in a report to ACDAP in November 2018. In the course of the scrutiny, the team read a wide range of documents presented in support of the application. The team also spoke to a range of stakeholders and observed meetings and events pertinent to the application.

## Key information about the University of Cumbria

The University of Cumbria was formed in 2007 from the Cumbria Institute of the Arts, St Martin's College and the Cumbrian campus of the University of Central Lancashire. It delivers undergraduate and postgraduate provision across six campuses at Carlisle, Ambleside, Lancaster, London, Workington, and Barrow-in-Furness.

The University's mission is to provide and promote excellent and accessible higher education, which enhances the lives of individuals, supports the needs of local economies, and fosters the development of the communities to which it belongs.

For over 40 years, first as St Martin's College, and then with the formation of the University of Cumbria, research degrees have been validated by Lancaster University. The first PhD of a student supervised at St Martin's College was awarded in 1987. Under the partnership agreement, the University of Cumbria is able to offer and deliver, MPhil, PhD by thesis, by alternative format/practice, and by published work.

In 2017-18, the University had a total of 7,818 students enrolled with a full-time equivalent (fte) of 5,683.4. Of these, 5,921 were studying undergraduate programmes and 1,789 were studying postgraduate taught programmes. There were 100 (63.5 fte) registered research students, of whom 26 (26 per cent) were full-time and 74 (74 per cent) were part-time, 36 of those being University of Cumbria staff. There is a total of 225 full-time academic staff and 126 fractional (78.16 fte); 100 (28 per cent) staff are internally approved to supervise doctoral degree students.

# Exercise of taught degree awarding powers

The University of Cumbria, in the form of St Martin's College, one of its constituent organisations, was granted TDAP in 2006, meeting the criteria set out in the 2004 guidance on degree awarding powers.

In seeking RDAP, an applicant must have first secured TDAP and must demonstrate that it continues to satisfy the criteria governing the grant of TDAP and exercises appropriate stewardship of such powers. The scrutiny team's findings are as follows.

## A        Governance and academic management

1        The University of Cumbria Board of Directors (the Board) determines the educational character and objectives of the University as well as ensuring the effective and efficient use of University resources. Governance responsibilities for quality assurance are delegated to the Academic Governance Committee (AGC).

2        In the course of the 2017-18 academic year, the University approved a new Strategic Plan for 2017-20, which emphasises student recruitment and portfolio development, student experience and outcomes, improving student survey and retention metrics, and building institutional reputation and standing. To better achieve the priorities in the Strategic Plan, including with respect to improving student outcomes, implementing outcomes of a Portfolio Review, and improving academic capability, the University also reviewed its executive arrangements having previously reviewed its deliberative structures in early 2017. It was evident that the reconfigured Vice Chancellor's Executive Group, University senior managers and Academic Department teams function effectively to help achieve strategic objectives as set out in the Annual Operating Plan (AOP). The University is governed, managed and administered effectively with clear lines of accountability for academic responsibilities alongside effective consideration of action plans, metrics and externality. The University is self-aware, self-critical and takes appropriate action at the strategic level.

## B        Academic standards and quality assurance

Following review of the deliberative structure, Academic Board now has three major subcommittees. As well as the Research and Enterprise Committee (REC), which has Research Degrees Subcommittee and Research Ethics Panel reporting into it, there is an Academic Strategy and Planning Committee, with terms of reference aligned to the Office for Students Regulatory Framework, and the Student Success and Quality Assurance Committee. The latter committee was formed in 2017 by merging three previously existing committees and plays a key role in the management of quality and standards. Academic Board delegates the majority of work relating to research and research degrees to REC. Observation of committees and consideration of minutes confirmed that the University's deliberative structures are appropriately constituted, well focused, and fully aware of regulatory contexts in their management of academic standards and quality assurance. This enabled the University to efficiently conduct a review and redevelopment of its portfolio and undertake revisions to the Academic Regulations. The most recent statutory reports, and evidence of sound stewardship of related action plans up to University Board level, demonstrates that the University is efficiently exercising its responsibilities for the setting and maintaining of academic standards and the management of academic quality.

## C    Scholarship and the pedagogical effectiveness of academic staff

3       To advance its strategic objectives, the University has well-established mechanisms for the development and recognition of excellent teaching, and the support of learning. These include the recently approved Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy. Commitment to the continuing development of staff as teachers is evident in the Annual Excellence Awards, a well-attended, annual Learning and Teaching Fest, and recognition by the Professional Standards Framework (UKPSF). Higher Education Academy Fellowship is a prerequisite for University funding of further study and staff development. An above average number of academic staff hold Fellowship status or above with 31 being recognised as Senior Fellow at the time of the application.

4       Academic staff development is embedded in institutional and departmental strategies, action plans and annual appraisals. The revised Human Resources strategy contains plans for staff development, reward and recognition, use of hybrid practitioner roles and graduate tutors as well as measures to attract and retain staff. Professor, Associate Professor and Professor of Practice titles recognise contribution to the University's reputation and development. Learning and Teaching leads are to be introduced across departments. The Performance and Professional Development Review (PPDR) system operates throughout the University and there is evidence of efforts to further embed research within teaching across departments. The team observed an institutional culture that facilitates, recognises and rewards high quality teaching.

## D    The environment supporting the delivery of taught higher education programmes

5       Resource allocation is closely tied to strategic objectives with strong governance and prudent planning to manage the distributed campuses. Course design and assessment practices provide sufficient stretch that ensures most students make progress and develop skills and understanding that are valued by employers. A range of high-quality employability initiatives include partnerships with local employers, placements and volunteering opportunities. Across the duration of the scrutiny, there was evidence of significant investment in study space at the Lancaster campus for postgraduate research students.

6       The University's Year 2 Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) Statement lists notable recent successes, including with respect to course design and assessment practices, high quality employability initiatives, support for widening participation, student engagement, practitioner engagement and an institutional culture that facilitates, recognises and rewards high quality teaching. However, the University is aware that despite these accomplishments, it is underperforming in key areas including in the National Student Survey (NSS) and in terms of non-continuation rates. Responses aimed at improving the student experience and student outcomes are set out in NSS and Postgraduate Research Experience Survey (PRES) action plans as well as the AOP. Academic Board and its subcommittees oversee and monitor action planning and the effectiveness of the identified interventions. External examiner reports provide evidence of a high-quality learning experience and a good level of student satisfaction with their programmes. The student voice is evident in regular reports from the Students' Union to Academic Board and other deliberative committees. Students met by the team identified various ways in which they were able to participate in committees and other groups. The team was able to confirm that the University maintains and seeks to improve the student environment for the delivery of its taught programmes.

# Detailed scrutiny against research degree awarding powers criteria

## Academic staff

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**Criterion 1**

The organisation's supervision of its research students, and any teaching it undertakes at doctoral level, is informed by a high level of professional knowledge of current research and advanced scholarly activity in its subjects of study.

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**Policies and procedures relating to research and advanced scholarship are understood and applied consistently both by those involved in the delivery of research degrees and, where appropriate, by the students so involved**

7        The University's Strategic Plan 2017-18 to 2019-20, approved by University Board in May 2017, replaced its previous Corporate Strategy 2015-18. The Strategic Plan sets out the University's vision to 'be recognised as a catalyst for individual and regional prosperity and pride with national and international relevance, reach and impact', together with its mission, values and strategic aims. While the strategic aims do not explicitly mention research, the further development of research is noted as a key element of, and priority for, achieving these aims. The further development of research activity is also set out in the University's Annual Operating Statements for 2017-18 and 2018-19.

8        The University's new Research, Innovation and Enterprise Strategy (2018-21), approved by Academic Board in April 2018, and replacing its Research Strategy 2015, contributes to the achievement of the University's vision, covers all areas of research, innovation and enterprise and provides a framework within which the University's academic departments, research centres and centres of excellence will operate. The Strategy is organised around four interrelated themes: (i) Impact and Environment of Research, Innovation and Enterprise; (ii) Excellence in Postgraduate and Doctoral Portfolio; (iii) Research and Knowledge Exchange Capacity and Capability of Staff; (iv) Collaborative Partnerships and External Engagement. The University's approach to developing the Strategy was inclusive, with widespread discussion through its committee structure and other fora. The Strategy is published on the University's website and was rolled out at its Research and Innovation Conference in July 2018. The Strategy notes its links to the Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy 2017-22. It is too early to assess the impact of the revised Strategy, the implementation of which will be overseen by the REC, chaired by the Vice Chancellor and reporting to Academic Board.

9        The Research Office and Graduate School (comprising two separate entities under one department) provides University-wide services to academic departments, research centres, the professoriate and postgraduate research students. The Research Office provides administrative and practical assistance to staff and researchers, while the Graduate School supports all aspects of the postgraduate research student experience. Under the University's revised executive group and senior leadership team structures, operational from September 2017, the Director of Research and Head of the Graduate School reports directly to the Vice Chancellor. The Research Office and Graduate School produces an Annual Evaluation Report (AER) and Action Plan which are scrutinised through REC. Staff and students commented very positively about the roles of, and support received from, the Research Office and Graduate School. Evidence from observations confirms that this department makes a significant contribution to the leadership, development, management and oversight of the University's research and postgraduate research degree provision.

10        The University operates under its awarding body's, Lancaster University, academic regulations. The University has developed and effectively operated its own comprehensive set of codes of practice, policies, procedures and guides in relation to the management and quality assurance of its research degrees. These are mapped to the Quality Code where appropriate and are kept under regular review and updated as necessary. Evidence collected through the scrutiny demonstrates that regulations and policies are consistently applied and understood by staff and, where appropriate, by students. In readiness should RDAP be awarded, the University has also developed an appropriate draft set of regulations relating to assessment and examination of its own postgraduate research awards and for academic appeals. Transition arrangements are set out in the University's 2016 agreement with Lancaster University which is operable until 2021.

**Staff involved in the delivery of research degree programmes, in a teaching and/or supervisory capacity, are themselves active researchers**

11        The University expects all academic staff to be actively involved in their subject area through research, teaching, enterprise, professional practice or domain leadership and this is monitored through the staff appraisal system. This requirement is widely understood among staff as well as being reflected in the University's Strategic Plan and Research, Innovation and Enterprise Strategy. In its application, the University stated that 61 per cent of full-time and 42 per cent of part-time academic staff can demonstrate achievements within the past three years that are recognised by the wider academic community to be of national and/or international standing. This includes peer-reviewed journal articles and conference proceedings, chapters, books, and exhibitions (discussed further under Metric measure 3) and 86 per cent of full-time and 84 per cent of part-time staff who are doctoral degree supervisors can demonstrate achievements of national and international standing.

12        The University's eligibility criteria for PhD supervisors requires main supervisors to hold a doctoral level qualification or be nearing completion, be a member of staff (0.2 fte as a minimum), be active researchers and have peer-reviewed publications within the previous three years. At the time of application, 86 per cent of full-time and 92 per cent of part-time staff acting as main supervisors held doctoral level qualifications. The criteria also state that, to become an approved supervisor and part of a supervisory team, staff must show that they are working towards these criteria. As of May 2018, the University had 98 approved internal PhD supervisors (71 full-time and 27 part-time staff, with 52 of the full-time staff being main supervisors) and 22 external PhD supervisors, 10 of whom are former staff, four are Emeritus Professors, two are Visiting Professors and the remainder are drawn from other UK higher education institutions, companies and associations. Some external supervisors were previously University staff who were continuing as supervisor until the student completes, while others bring specific expertise. Of the 98 internal supervisors, 75 are currently part of a supervisory team. All departments are represented albeit in some areas the numbers of supervisors are small: 18 supervisors are from the Department of Business, Law, Policing and Social Sciences; 26 from Science, Natural Resources and Outdoor Studies; nine from Medical and Sports Sciences; 20 from Health, Psychology and Social Studies; nine from the Institute of Arts; nine from the Institute of Education; three from Nursing, Health and Professional Practice; and four from non-academic departments. Nine of the staff currently approved as PhD supervisors (eligible to be part of a supervisory team but not as main supervisors) do not hold a doctoral qualification but have been approved on the basis of their subject knowledge. Over the past four years the University has increased the number of internal doctoral supervisors through workforce planning, training and mentorship and is gradually decreasing its reliance on external supervisors.

**The organisation can demonstrate research and advanced scholarship achievement/output among its full-time staff complement**

13      As noted earlier, all academic staff are expected to be actively involved in their subject area through research, teaching, enterprise, professional practice or domain leadership and such activity is expected to result in measurable outputs or achievement. The University conducts an annual research and scholarly activity staff survey to monitor continued measures of success and activity and uses an online repository to capture the outputs of its staff and researchers.

14      All departments are expected to contribute to the University's research agenda. Departments report on this activity through the annual monitoring process within the comprehensive AERs, which also include an action plan. The section on research and scholarly activity includes a discussion on postgraduate research students, the number of research outputs/publications achieved in year, the number of staff who have undergone supervisory training and have contributed to the researcher development programme, as well as an open commentary on research activity and how this feeds into teaching practice. A mid-year review of progress against actions arising from AERs takes place and is reported to Academic Board. AERs for 2016-17, considered at the January 2018 meeting of Student Success and Quality Assurance Committee (SSQAC), demonstrate that a range of research and advanced scholarly activities are being undertaken by academic staff although this varies across the disciplines; for example, in relation to outputs/publications reported for the year these varied from 17 (Nursing, Health and Professional Practice) to 58 (Medical and Sports Sciences).

15      The University decided that, from 2017-18, Research Centre targets and activities would be monitored through meetings with the Director of Research and the then Pro Vice Chancellor. Research Centre annual monitoring reports are also presented to REC. Reports presented to the June 2018 meeting of REC provide evidence of sustained research and advanced scholarly activity and outputs in the Research Centres involving core centre-based staff, collaborating partners, visiting researchers, postgraduate research students and staff from within the academic departments.

16      The variability of research activity across and within subject areas is acknowledged by the University and evidence collected during the scrutiny confirms this variation. For example, variation is evident in academic staff curricula vitae (CVs); in some departmental leadership team meetings there was little or no mention of research activity; departmental AERs for 2016-17 reported varying levels of research activity; and at the January 2018 meeting of REC it was noted that there was a varying profile of research engagement across departments. Despite this variability, the University is committed to developing research across all disciplines as reflected in its Research, Innovation and Enterprise Strategy and has already taken a number of positive steps to achieve this aim. For example, in the Department of Nursing, Health and Professional Practice (NHPP) and the Institute of Education (IOE), plans were put in place to increase the number of doctoral supervisors
and a number of staff are being supported to undertake doctoral study.

**The organisation has a strong and sustainable research culture, which directly informs and enhances the supervision and teaching of research degree students**

17      The University continues to work on developing, embedding and promoting a sustainable research culture in a number of ways and the 2016 periodic review report from Lancaster University noted the considerable improvement in research culture. The University's academic structure, revised in 2015, consists of seven departments together with five research centres: the Cumbrian Centre for Health Technologies

(CaCHeT); the Centre for Regional Economic Development (CRED); the Centre for National Parks and Protected Areas (CNPPA); the Institute for Leadership and Sustainability (IFLAS); and Learning Education and Development (LED). There are also six research groups: the Active Ageing Research Group (AARG); the Mental Health Research Group (MHRG); the Arts Research Initiative (ARI); Health and Social Care Evaluations (HASCE); the Teacher Education Advancement Network (TEAN); and Social Issues in Medical Imaging (SIMG). Centres of Excellence are also being developed. Staff involved in the centres and groups comprise a mixture of dedicated staff and those staff working within academic departments. A formal procedure is in place for the approval of Research Centres, and CNPPA (31 May 2016) and LED (17 Jan 2017) were approved following the process detailed in the Research Centre Policy.

18      Research centres and groups provide a clear focus for research, and for 2017-18 a decision was made to associate research centres with specific academic departments to further embed research activity and ensure the work of the centres feeds into teaching activity. The associations involve CRED and IFLAS with Business, Law, Policing and Social Sciences; CaCHeT (together with the research group HASCE) with Health, Psychology and Social Studies; LED with Education and CNPPA with Science, Natural Resources and Outdoor Studies. While it is too early to fully assess the impact of these changes, the scrutiny team considers that closer alignment of research centres with relevant departments has the potential to support the University's efforts to further develop its research activity and culture.

19      The University continues to increase the number of research centres and groups, based on areas of strength. Two new proposed Centres of Excellence in Policing and Paramedic Practice are noted in its Strategic Plan and the University is reviewing the focus and scope of CNPPA in light of recent government and local forward plans. The University has recently developed a Health, Sport and Wellbeing Strategy and is creating a new Research Centre in Health that will incorporate some of the existing expertise in this area; a new Pro Vice Chancellor Health, being recruited at the time of writing of this report, will establish and develop the new centre.

20      Throughout an academic year the University holds and hosts an extensive range of conferences, public lectures, workshops, seminars and other research-related events involving staff, students and external participants. An increase in the number of public lectures and seminars open to students is also an aim of the University's Campus Vibrancy Project. As part of its tenth anniversary celebrations as the University of Cumbria, the University increased the number of Visiting Professors and Research Fellows and introduced the title of Professor of Practice; the contribution of these Professors and Research Fellows to the University includes the delivery of lectures, seminars and workshops and working with staff and students, with some undertaking specific roles defined by the University (see paragraph 24). The University also holds an annual Research and Innovation conference at which presentations are made by both staff and students. In addition, it produces four peer-reviewed journals.

21      Despite progress, the development of its research culture remains a challenge to the University. For example, in the PRES 2015, only 45 per cent of respondents overall gave positive responses to the questions on research culture. In the 2017 PRES, and following actions taken by the University to further develop its researcher development programme, this rose to 56 per cent overall, albeit remaining below sector benchmarks. Actions have been taken in response to the 2017 survey including the development of a dedicated postgraduate space at the Lancaster Campus and the upgrading of the existing spaces at the Carlisle (Fusehill) and Ambleside campuses. The January 2018 meeting of REC also discussed the need for the University to further develop its research culture and environment (see paragraphs 55-56 for further details of how the University is responding to the challenge).

**The organisation has a critical mass of research staff and students, representing a viable research community internally, while also promoting active engagement in discipline-based and broader based communities of researchers and scholars external to the organisation**

22      At the time of its application, the University employed 378 academic staff comprising 250 full-time and 128 part-time staff. Of these staff 64/250 (or 25.6 per cent) of full-time and 28/128 (or 21.8 per cent) of part-time academic staff were qualified to doctoral level. There were 42 staff studying for a PhD part-time within the University (currently 37 following a number of recent completions) and 26 staff were studying for PhDs or Professional Doctorates in other higher education institutions. The University is increasing the number of research-active staff through workforce planning, the development of its current staff, the recruitment of staff who already hold a doctorate and can demonstrate engagement with research, and by ensuring that all advertisements for academic staff make reference to research.

23      The number of professors is modest. As of September 2017, the University had 11 full Professors, two of whom were members of the Vice Chancellors Executive and 10 Readers/Associate Professors; Nursing, Health and Professional Practice had no Professors or Associate Professors in place and Medical and Sports Sciences had two Associate Professors but no full Professors in place. However, as noted earlier, the University supplements this expertise through the appointment of Visiting Professors and Research Fellows and Professors of Practice. There are currently 21 Visiting Professors and 20 Research Fellows spread across all departments. The Professor of Practice role seeks to recognise individuals eminent in their field of practice and to draw on their talent and standing to enhance the curriculum, experience and environment provided to students. They are drawn from senior figures in business, industry, government, the third sector or academia in areas relevant to the University. Their input falls into three main areas: contribution to teaching; interacting with academic staff, senior management and students at an applied and/or strategic level; and helping to facilitate teaching, research and enterprise impact and visibility. Currently, the University has appointed six Professors of Practice. The scrutiny team was of the view that Visiting Professors and Research Fellows and, where appropriate, Professors of Practice make a positive contribution to the University's research environment and culture.

24      The University has a relatively small number of postgraduate research students being one per cent of the total student fte with the majority being UK students; 74 per cent of the University's research students are part-time and 36 per cent are staff. The University's on-campus postgraduate research students are located at four of its campus locations with a number of students also studying through distance-learning. The majority of on-campus students are located at Carlisle (Fusehill Street), Lancaster and Ambleside. At the time of its application, the University had 106 (66.5 fte) postgraduate research students, and similar numbers were recruited in 2016-17 (107 students) and 2017-18 (111 students). In the last two years the University has recruited under target (120 and 140 respectively). The number of full-time students per year has increased slightly from 27 at the time of application to 31, although the number of part-time has remained relatively stable over the period at 79 or 80 students in each year. The number of part-time students who are University staff has declined from 42 to 37 as staff members have achieved their awards. These figures show that as the number of staff completing postgraduate research degrees declines the University has slightly increased the number of external students.

25      In its application the University set out its plans, should RDAP be awarded, to further develop its postgraduate research portfolio including professional doctorates, and to incrementally grow its postgraduate research student numbers reaching 180-200 by 2020. The new Research, Innovation and Enterprise Strategy also refers to growing the

postgraduate and doctoral portfolio. The University plans to increase the number of external research students as staff complete their doctoral studies. Projected numbers for postgraduate research students for 2018-19 are 130, comprising 90 part-time students and 40 full-time students. However, the University Board meeting of 5 July 2018 noted that research numbers are not expected to rise for 2018-19 and given the University's recent under recruitment against target (see paragraph 25) this appears to be a realistic assessment.

**The organisation has established research-relevant links, formal and informal, with other higher education and specialist research institutions through, for example, joint research activities; and research examinerships (both those appointed as internal examiners of research degrees by the awarding institution and staff of the applicant organisation appointed to act in a similar capacity elsewhere)**

26      The University currently has 139 active research-relevant links with institutions in the UK and overseas; these include links with UK (48) and international (28) higher education institutions; UK (34) and international (26) institutions and a small number (3) of societies/associations. These links cover funded research collaborations, jointly authored journal papers or conference presentations, partner staff acting in an external supervisory capacity, joint exhibitions and other research collaborations and outputs. The University provided further details of a number of these collaborations and their achievements within its application. One of the aims of the University's recently implemented Research, Innovation and Enterprise Strategy is to grow its 'productive partnerships with other universities, research-based institutions, stakeholders and business, regionally, nationally and internationally, with small and medium enterprises, industry, government departments and non-government organisations'. The Strategy sets out how the University will achieve this aim and the indicators of success.

27      Whilst staff participation in external examining activity is encouraged by the University, the number of academic staff with experience of external examining of research degrees is low with 18 full-time and 5 part-time staff identified in the 2017 metric data (21 full-time and 10 part-time staff in the updated 2018 data).

**Academic staff command the respect and confidence of academic peers across the sector as reflected, for example, in Research Excellence Framework (REF) entry and scores; other authoritative external reviews; and awards of distinction**

28      The University submitted to Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 2001 and 2008 and to Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2014. There were 50.93 fte staff submitted to RAE 2008 (15 per cent of eligible staff) across seven units of assessment (UoAs); five UoAs achieved ratings of 3* (ranging from 5 per cent to 20 per cent) and one UoA achieved a small proportion (5 per cent) of 4* ratings. All seven units had a percentage of unclassified (ranging from 5 per cent to 35 per cent), 1* (ranging from 10 per cent to 55 per cent) and 2* (ranging from 10 per cent to 65 per cent) ratings. Following the results of RAE 2008, and the arrival of a new Deputy Vice Chancellor in 2011, the University decided to consider only outputs judged externally as 2* or above, and where there were clear impact cases and environment. Due to the reconfiguration of the units of assessment for REF 2014, the University also reviewed the potential units of assessment in line with its academic portfolio and areas of national and international research activity, submitting to two units for the first time and dropping three units submitted to RAE 2008. This approach achieved improved results for the University albeit with a smaller proportion of staff submitted. The University's submission to REF 2014 involved 26.8 fte staff (11.6 per cent of eligible staff) across 6 UoAs; all units achieved 3* ratings (ranging from 8 per cent to 44 per cent), with four units achieving 4* (7 per cent to 14 per cent), in addition all units achieved some 2* (29 per cent

to 60 per cent) and 1* (6 per cent to 31 per cent) ratings with two units achieving a small proportion of unclassified (2 per cent and 4 per cent). Overall, in REF 2014, the University achieved 80 per cent of its research rated at 2* or above, compared to 41 per cent in RAE 2008 and the research rated as 3* or 4* rose from 9 per cent in RAE 2008 to 33 per cent in REF 2014.

29      In its application the University set out its aims for REF 2021, noting that it will take into account relevant guidance as it becomes available including in relation to the number of staff submitted. The University has kept itself informed in relation to REF 2021 developments with regular updates being made to relevant committees such as REC and Academic Board throughout 2017-18. A REF steering group and REF development groups were set up in 2015 to plan for REF 2021; while the former was initially 'stood down' during 2017-18 to be reconvened in 2018-19, it was subsequently re-established in 2017-18 with its first meeting in April 2018. The REF steering group reports to REC and has responsibility for decisions on generic issues such as quality thresholds and the timetable for the REF selection process, and will request relevant external review of each intended UoA prior to submission. The outcomes of REF 2021 are noted as an indicator of success under Theme 1 within the University Research, Innovation and Enterprise Strategy.

30      The University's new Research, Innovation and Enterprise Strategy states the University's intention to increase research and enterprise income, and staff are supported through the research office to apply for external research funding. The University's research-related income is low but relatively stable varying from £395,229 in 2015-16 to £465,225 in 2016-17 and nearly £602,964 in 2017-18. Quality-related research and Higher Education Innovation Funding (HEIF) funding has fallen from an additional £511,413 in 2015-16 to £278,372 in 2017-18. Therefore, total income from postgraduate research has varied from over £906,642 in 2015-16 to £881,336 in 2017-18. Currently, the University does not hold any research council funding. While wishing to increase the amount of research income achieved, the University notes that it needs to be realistic about the type of income and amount of growth that can be achieved, and at the University Board meeting of 5 July it was noted that for 2018-19 research income is likely to remain static.

**Staff involved with the delivery of its research degree programmes have substantial relevant knowledge, understanding and experience of both current research and advanced scholarship in their discipline area and that such knowledge, understanding and experience directly inform and enhance their supervision and teaching**

31      Much of the discussion and evidence relating to this area is covered elsewhere in the report. The University requires staff involved in the delivery of research programmes to have appropriate knowledge, understanding and experience of research in their discipline area (see paragraphs 12 and 14) and this is used to inform their supervision and teaching practice (see paragraphs 13 and 15). The University does not accept postgraduate research students into areas where there is insufficient supervisory expertise or experience (see paragraph 56).

32      Research Degrees subcommittee, chaired by the Director of Research and Head of the Graduate School, is responsible to REC for the management and overall quality assurance of the University's research degree provision, while the REC is responsible to Academic Board for policy and processes for research, enterprise, scholarship and knowledge transfer, research students and the quality, standards and operation of research programmes. The scrutiny team's observation of these committees provided additional evidence that there is a sufficient number of staff within the University with substantial relevant knowledge, understanding and experience of both current research and advanced scholarship in their discipline area.

**Staff involved in the delivery of research degrees have staff development and appraisal opportunities aimed at enabling them to develop and enhance their knowledge of current research and advanced scholarship**

33      The University achieved the European Commission HR Excellence in Research award in 2016 and its two-year review is published on its website. The University noted in its application that this achievement illustrates its commitment to supporting researchers in their careers.

34      The University's commitment to developing staff in relation to research is demonstrated through the wide range of development opportunities offered. The University supports up to five weeks (pro rata) to be spent on self-managed research or scholarly activity, as stated in its academic workload tariff document. Additionally, support for research is offered through sabbatical leave, funding schemes, research mentoring, writing retreats, career development opportunities, early career researcher grants and the University's researcher development programme. This programme is aligned to the Vitae Researcher Development framework, coordinated by the Graduate School, and is open to both staff and students. Academic staff are eligible to apply for a fee waiver when registering for a PhD at the University or 50 per cent funding for doctoral study at an external institution. This research specific development activity is backed up by HR policies including the Professional Development policy which was revised in 2016 to include specific provision for research-only staff. Staff confirmed that extensive support for research-related staff development is in place.

35      The University has in place a comprehensive, compulsory, annual Performance and Professional Development Review (PPDR) system. For academic staff, objectives cover learning and teaching, research and scholarship, income-generating activity and enterprise. In addition, there is specific consideration of each staff member's research and scholarship activity and plans, which was confirmed by staff. Activity undertaken through self-managed research and scholarly activity is considered through the PPDR process. The University monitors the completion rate for PPDRs; the 2015-16 completion rate for academic PPDRs was 94.66 per cent and in 2016-17 the completion rate was 83.8 per cent.

36      Clearly defined procedures are in place for the conferment of the title of Professor and Associate Professor. These were reviewed in 2014 when the title of Reader was changed to Associate Professor and the University has recently reviewed the criteria again making some minor changes and moving from an annual to a biennial cycle of applications. The University also awards Emeritus, Visiting and Honorary titles.

**Metric tests**

37      CVs of all but three of the total population of 250 full-time and 128 (78.47 fte) part-time academic staff in post as of 1 January 2017 were provided on which the data in the University's application is based. Updated data as of 1 January 2018 was also provided and this is noted for completeness. Some, but not all, of the CVs were in a standard format covering the criteria on which the application is based. The University also provided additional helpful information regarding which academic staff were deemed to meet each of the metric measures and justification for their inclusion, and where queries arose, were happy to discuss these with the scrutiny team. The University's analysis against the metric measures was very thorough and reliable.

**A significant proportion (normally around a half as a minimum) of its full-time academic staff are active and recognised contributors to at least one organisation such as a subject association, learned society or relevant professional body**

38      The University stated that 131 (52 per cent) of full-time academic staff are active and recognised contributors to at least one organisation such as a subject association, learned society or relevant professional body. The University also stated that 40 (31 per cent) of its 128 (78.47 fte) part-time academic staff meet this requirement.

39      The University defined 'active and recognised contributors' as requiring individuals to have made some form of research or scholarly related contribution to a relevant organisation. Such activity must have included a public output or outcome such as election to a fellowship, holding office, exhibiting or giving a paper at a conference or other national meeting, membership of a working group or special interest group, and contribution to a publication. Included organisations were expected to have a regional, national or international remit and could include networks with a research or scholarly focus. The University's starting point for included organisations was based on the UK government list of approved professional organisations and learned societies. Research leads and Heads of Department were consulted regarding a final agreed list. The University stated that the output or outcome could be a 'one-off' rather than a more sustained contribution and it did not expect staff to be members of the organisation (where appropriate) to which the contribution was made. However, the scrutiny team's verification of the available CVs showed that the majority of staff said to have met this metric have maintained a more sustained contribution to a relevant organisation; only a handful (around four) members of staff could reliably be said to fall into the category of having made a 'one-off' contribution to a relevant organisation.

40      Within the parameters defined above, the scrutiny team was able to verify the University's claim for 128 of the 131 full-time staff from the CVs provided; three CVs were unable to be provided. If the three staff for whom there were no CVs are included in the calculations then 131 of the 250 full-time academic staff, or 52 per cent, meet the metric test. If the staff for whom no CVs were provided are excluded, then 128 out of the 250 full-time academic staff or 51 per cent meet the metric measure. In either case the University meets the requirements of the metric test, albeit by a narrow margin.

41      The updated data for 1 January 2018 shows a reduction in academic staff numbers with 224 full-time and 119 part-time staff in post. In this data, 116 (52 per cent) full-time and 44 (37 per cent) part-time academic staff were identified by the University as meeting the requirements of the metric test. This represents a reduction in the actual number of full-time staff meeting the requirements of the test and an increase in the numbers of part-time staff meeting the requirements. Due to the reduction in full-time staff numbers the percentage of full-time staff meeting the metric measure remains at over 50 per cent.

**A significant proportion (normally around a third as a minimum) of its full-time academic staff have recent (that is, within the past three years) personal experience of research activity in other UK or international higher education or specialist research institutions by, for example, acting as external examiners for research degrees, serving as validation/review panel members, or contributing to collaborative research projects with other organisations**

42      The University claimed that, overall, 101 (40 per cent) of its 250 full-time academic staff were actively involved in external research collaboration; it also stated that 28 (22 per cent) of its 128 part-time staff meet this requirement. In relation to the full-time staff, 100 staff (40 per cent) were cited as having undertaken collaborative research with colleagues in another UK or overseas higher education institution, four (two per cent) as having

contributed to the approval or review of research or research supervisory provision, and 17 staff (seven per cent) as having experience of externally examining research degrees.

43      The scrutiny team was able to verify the University's claim for 100 of the 101 full-time staff; the CV of one member of staff could not be provided. The data also included three members of staff whose collaboration was with their supervisor as part of their doctoral degree studies, one of which, however, had subsequently participated in other relevant collaborative research activity. If the one member of academic staff for whom there was no CV, along with the two members of staff whose research collaboration was with their supervisor during their doctoral study are included in the calculation then 101 (40 per cent) of the full-time academic staff meet the metric test. If these three staff are excluded from the calculation, then 98 (39 per cent) of the 250 full-time academic staff meet the metric measure. In either case the University meets the requirements of the metric test.

44      The updated data for 1 January 2018 shows a reduction in academic staff numbers with 224 full-time and 119 part-time staff in post. In this data, 90 (40 per cent) full-time and 27 (23 per cent) part-time academic staff were identified by the University as meeting the requirements of the metric test. This represents a reduction in the actual number of full-time and part-time staff meeting the requirements of the metric test albeit, due to the reduction in full-time staff numbers, the percentage of full-time staff meeting the metric measure remains at 40 per cent.

**A significant proportion (normally around a third as a minimum) of its full-time academic staff can demonstrate achievements that are recognised by the wider academic community to be of national and/or international standing (for example as indicated by authoritative external peer reviews)**

45      The University identified 152 (61 per cent) full-time academic staff overall as engaged in research or other forms of advanced scholarship. The University also identified 54 (42 per cent) of its 128 (78.47 fte) part-time academic staff as meeting the metric test. The University accepts any academic or professional achievements (activities or outputs) within this category as long as these achievements could be verified (through detailed scrutiny) as meeting the requirement of being of national or international standing. The scrutiny team was able to verify the claims for 150 of the 152 full-time staff from the CVs provided; two CVs were unable to be provided by the University. The scrutiny team noted that the CVs included some very established researchers with sustained research activity together with staff with just one or two outputs in total (accounting for around 11 per cent of the 150 CVs provided).

46      Seventy-one (28 per cent) of the full-time academic staff have published articles in peer-reviewed journals (the peer-review status of these journals has been confirmed internally); 23 (nine per cent) have delivered or been invited to deliver keynote conference papers or public lectures; 138 (55 per cent) have published or produced other public or professional outputs; 18 (seven per cent) have organised national or international conferences; and 17 (seven per cent) have been editors or members of editorial boards of peer-reviewed journals. Taken individually, some of these figures indicate relatively low levels of activity in areas such as conference organisation, editorial work and the delivery of key-note or public lectures. The small proportion of staff entered to REF 2014 and achieving outputs rated as of national or international standing was also discussed earlier (see paragraph 29).

47      If the staff for whom the CVs were missing are included in the calculation, then 152 (61 per cent) of the full-time academic staff meet the metric measure; if excluded from the calculation 150 (60 per cent) of the full-time staff meet the metric measure. In both cases the metric test is met overall.

48      The updated data for 1 January 2018 shows a reduction in staff numbers with 224 full-time and 119 part-time staff in post. In this data, 136 (61 per cent) full-time and 57 (48 per cent) part-time academic staff were identified by the University as meeting the requirements of the metric test. This represents a reduction in the actual number of full-time staff and a slight increase in the number of part-time staff meeting the requirements of the metric test albeit, due to the reduction in full-time staff numbers, the percentage of full-time staff meeting the requirements remains at 61 per cent.

# National guidance

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**Criterion 2**

The organisation satisfies relevant national guidance relating to the award of research degrees.

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**The organisation satisfies, or has the capacity to satisfy, the expectations of the Qualifications Frameworks in relation to the levels of its research degree programmes**

49      The responsibility for ensuring that research degrees delivered by the University align adequately to the FHEQ lies with the awarding body. At the time of the application, the University offered MPhil and PhD degrees (by thesis, published works, and alternative formats) in conjunction with one awarding partner, Lancaster University. The University's awarding partner monitors the partnership via its Collaborative Provision Oversight committee and through validation events. Although Lancaster University is ultimately responsible for the setting the academic standards and ensuring these are met, given the maturity of the relationship, the University is afforded a significant degree of autonomy. Validation reports from the University's awarding body confirm and positively comment on the University's effective management of academic standards in relation to research degrees. As noted at paragraph 11, the University has also developed a draft set of academic regulations for its own postgraduate research awards and these are aligned with the FHEQ. Transition arrangements are set out in the University's 2016 agreement with Lancaster University which is operable until 2021.

**The organisation satisfies, or has the capacity to satisfy, the expectations of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education**

50      The University, in its application for RDAP, indicates that its processes and procedures for preparing candidates for postgraduate research awards adhere to relevant national guidance; for example, the University's researcher development programme and doctoral supervisor training have been mapped against the level 8 criteria in the FHEQ. The University's postgraduate research code of practice has been mapped against the Quality Code (*Chapter B11: Research Degrees*). The University's awarding partner confirms adherence to relevant national guidance in validation and period review events commending the use of supervisory teams, IT facilities (specifically the virtual learning environment), and the Graduate School as a single point of contact for postgraduate research students.

51      The University's Graduate School is responsible for managing and supporting postgraduate research students through their studies. The Director of Research and Head of the Graduate School oversees adherence to the Lancaster University's academic regulations and relevant national frameworks. The University reviews the Graduate School on an annual basis via the AER that is submitted to the University's REC as well as the RECs Research Degrees Sub-Committee (at which a representative of the awarding body is normally present). Observations of the REC and Research Degrees Sub-Committee confirm that they function in line with their terms of reference. The meetings offer the Director of Research and Head of the Graduate School an opportunity to reflect on the progress of

actions relating to research degrees, including the development of a dedicated postgraduate research study space. The University has recently increased the number of students on deliberative committees to ensure that the diverse student population is suitably represented. Observations of both the Research Degrees Sub-Committee and REC demonstrate there is clear engagement of the University with postgraduate students in committees.

52      The University participates in the PRES and intends to participate in the 2019 PRES. In the 2015 PRES the University found supervision, resources, progression, responsibilities, research skills, professional development, and overall satisfaction corresponded to that seen in the University's benchmark group. The 2015 PRES did highlight two areas for development including the need to develop teaching opportunities for postgraduate research students and the need to further develop and embed the postgraduate research students in the research culture. The 2017 PRES evidenced progress in engaged postgraduate research students in the University's culture but highlighted a small decrease in satisfaction relating to supervision. The results from the PRES and implementation of the PRES action plan, developed by the Director of Research and Head of the Graduate School, are monitored by the Research Degrees Sub-Committee and the REC.

53      The University is clear in its desire to improve on a number of areas highlighted in the PRES, including access to facilities, teaching opportunities and the development of an inclusive research culture. The University has invested a considerable amount into commissioning space specifically for postgraduate research students, most notably at the Lancaster Campus at which the University's Graduate School personnel are now co-located with postgraduate research students in the newly opened postgraduate research study area. There are also ongoing efforts by the University to improve campus vibrancy with members of the Vice Chancellors Executive appointed for each campus tasked with spearheading their allocated campuses' services and environment.

54      The University aims to include postgraduate research students in the University's research culture. It highlights that it organises a number of seminars and conferences throughout the academic year at which postgraduate research students are invited to participate, such as the annual two-week 'Doctoral Summer School' which includes the Research Student Conference (previously Doctoral Colloquium) where research students present their work and progress during their second and third years. There is also an annual Research and Innovation Conference where students in their final year may submit abstracts for consideration. Observations of a selection of these research-focused events, including the Research and Innovation Conference in 2017 and the Applied Psychology Staff Student Conference in 2018, demonstrated clear student engagement and a strong commitment to research and scholarly activity. Nevertheless, ensuring research students feel part of the University's research culture remains a challenge, especially given the large number of part-time and distance-learning students.

55      The University's research degree regulations, on behalf of their awarding body, are made clear to postgraduate research students in the form of a Student Handbook. Applicants for research degrees are interviewed by a panel, a process coordinated by the Graduate School and designed to judge academic potential. Throughout the scrutiny process it became clear that, in addition to confirming academic ability, the University ensures that potential research students are only enrolled where adequate supervisory experience exists. The team met with students, student representatives, and representatives from the Students' Union who confirmed that their experience of studying a research degree had met their expectations. The University's researcher development programme aims to equip students and staff, whom are invited to attend sessions, with more transferable professional skills to complement their subject-specific training. The University has a number

of campuses at which postgraduate research students are based alongside a sizeable part-time and distance-learning provision. To ensure that these students are not unduly disadvantaged the University's Graduate School has started to use videoconferencing allowing students to engage irrespective of their locale.

56      Transfer from probationary PhD to confirmed PhD occurs between months 12 and 18 (months 18-24 for part-time students) following discussion within the supervisory team and the successful completion of panel interview. As each student progresses through their research degree, the Graduate School is responsible for ensuring that the arrangements for final examination of the thesis are in place. There is a clear process for appointing internal and external examiners for the final viva voce examination. Although the University is responsible for identifying potential viva voce examiners, the University's awarding body ultimately approves their appointment. Representatives from the University's awarding body confirm that this process takes place effectively and efficiently.

57      Supervisory teams are appointed for each postgraduate research student to support their development and normally consist of three members of staff with one academic taking the lead. The University has an established programme of doctoral supervisor training that covers student selection, admissions, interviewing, monitoring, progression/transfer, and examination. In meetings during the scrutiny period, the University noted the need to increase supervisory capacity. The University has made progress towards this and now has academic staff capable of supervising research degrees in each department; however, there remains a clear disparity in number (see paragraph 13).

**The organisation satisfies, or has the capacity to satisfy, the expectations of research degree management frameworks issued by relevant research councils, funding bodies and professional/statutory bodies**

58      At the time of application, the University did not have any research students attracting research council funding; however, the University does have a number of research students co-funded by organisations both in and outside the UK. The University has historically awarded a number of internally-funded studentships in the form of two full research degree studentships (circa £120,920). Following the last quality-related research funding allocation, the University introduced an additional six full studentships (circa £120,003) and four fees-only bursaries (circa £32,000).

59      The University has made clear its ambition to increase the amount of external research funding through the introduction of Professional Doctorates and a refreshed research community. Despite this, the total amount of research-related income has remained largely constant (see paragraph 31).

60      The University permits postgraduate research students to contribute to teaching activities as a means of developing professional skills as well as increasing the University's teaching capacity. In each case, teaching contracts will include a minimum of 10 hours' contact time. The Graduate School is responsible, alongside teaching and supervisory teams, for ensuring that students interested in teaching are suitably inducted and trained. Awareness of teaching opportunities was one of the areas highlighted in the current PRES action plan as an area for development. Observations of the REC in which the current PRES action plan was examined demonstrated that the University is evaluating how best to include postgraduate research students in teaching activities.

# Minimum number of doctoral degree conferments

> **Criterion 3**
>
> The applicant organisation has achieved more than 30 doctoral degree conferments awarded through partner universities in the UK.

61      From 1987 to the present, the University, as St Martin's College to July 2007 and as University of Cumbria from August 2007, has recommended 101 doctoral students to the awarding body for the conferment of their degree.